

The Impossibility of Solving the Highland Problem.

There is a sense of depression and fatalism about in the Highlands and Islands of north-west Scotland. The rate of unemployment is high; food and other essential goods are made more expensive than elsewhere by the high cost of transport; all the men seem to be old or alcoholic, or both; the Gaelic language is becoming extinct; and all the young men and women are leaving for the bright lights, for the attractions of the modern world. As a recent correspondent to the Stornoway Gazette wrote:

"Twentieth century circumstances have posed new problems for the crofting people in place of congestion and land hunger. Now sucked into the mainstream of British social and economic life, our fringe communities are gushing out life-blood at an alarming rate. The young folk are going, their credo inevitably equating 'getting on' with 'getting out' (1).

The Highlands are an area of decline, an area where everyone's thoughts are of past glories and present gloom. There is said to be a Highland problem, and no one has yet found the solution.

The most saddening thing about the Highlands is that the problem has been there for so long. Daniel Defoe wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in a poem entitled "Caledonia: A Poem in Honour of Scotland:"

"Wake Scotland, from thy long Lethargick Dream,  
Seem what thou art , and be what thou shalt seem;  
Shake off the Poverty, the sloth will die,  
Success alone, can quicken Industry.

To Land Improvement, and to Trade apply,  
They'll plentifully repay thy Industry."

(Defoe 1707: 54 - 5).

It is a poem that could have been written by a member of the Highlands and Islands Development Board (H.I.D.B.) more than 250 years later (2). The Board was set up in 1965 to attempt to solve the Highland Problem, one more in a long line of agencies which have tried to Improve the Highlands. But, since the Problem has been with us for so long the important question becomes not what can be done to stop and perhaps reverse the decline, but why there is any social life left there at all. Surely the end of the road must have been reached by now? the argument of this paper is that it is only by consideration of this question that we can come to any useful conclusion about the Highlands; that is, that there is no solution to the Highland Problem. What is so depressing about the Highlands and Islands is that the problem as it is at present constituted permits no solution: the road is endless.

People now date the start of the decline at the crushing of the clans by Butcher Cumberland in 1745. The process of destruction of the old ways of life has been carried on ever since. Some accuse the English of genocide (Ellis 1969:17), meaning that the eradication of the old Highland culture is as terrible as the murder of the inhabitants themselves. The English are explicitly compared with the mid-twentieth century Germans (loc. cit). Francis Thompson sums up the prevailing attitude when he says:

"All ethnic groups which differ in outlook, lifestyles, culture and language have had the "colonizing" pressures of master races; and the Gaels were, and indeed are today, in no way different from the Red Indians, the Jews, the Eskimoes, and the vanishing tribes of the Amazon river, all of whom face the prospect of extinction by processes of assimilation before another century is out" (Thompson 1974:62)

The English are the colonial power which has swamped the Highlands and has destroyed their identity. The Gaels are just one more subject race.

This is seen then to be a process of acculturation, of social change, of modernization, perhaps of Westernization. The Highlands have been the scene of a clash of two cultures; the dominant English and the noble, but defeated, Highlanders. The recent history of the Highlands is seen as the steadily increasing erosion of old ways of life, and of the drawing of the area into the wider social and economic life of Britain and the world. Increasing communications whether through railways and roads or through the spread of the English language, have forced the Highlanders to adopt new ways. There are still a few elements of the traditional life left, but they are fast disappearing.

The picture of traditional life has been painted by Eric Cregeen in the following words. Traditional Highland society :

'...possessed the characteristics of many more modern 'primitive' peoples. It is a society based on kinship, in which status is fixed by inheritance, and authority goes by descent. Knowledge and skills are handed on by example and word of mouth and are not exposed to overmuch questioning so that custom controls most of life. Religion is compatible with magic and with a widespread belief in witchcraft. The economy is largely a subsistence one, with only a modest degree of specialisation and markets are narrow. Central government is weak, and law and order are frequently disturbed by powerful magnates and tribal chiefs". (Cregeen 1971:150-1).

The echoes of early evolutionary anthropology, of for example Maine, are clear. No evidence is ever produced to justify this picture, however. In fact people seem quite ready to admit that there is very little evidence to support this view of life before the Fall. Professor Smout, in a widely acclaimed history of Scotland, admitted that there were only two extant reports of life before 1745 - those of Burt and Martin (Smout 1969:332) - yet he goes on to conclude that:

"The Highlands were tribal in the exact sense that nineteenth century Africa was tribal.....At the root of Highland Clanship lay the myth that all in a given clan were descended from a common ancestor who had, in some incredibly misty period of the past, founded the tribe" (Ibid: 334).

He says this on the basis of two reports. He recognises that Burt spoke .....in words that might have come from a Victorian explorer of darkest Africa (col. cit.) but fails to ask why this was, and what effect this

might have had on Burt's reports. Highland history, its social and economic life, are continually being rewritten so that the traditional way of life that used to exist appears to be disappearing. It does not matter, perhaps, that it is being rewritten on flimsy evidence, since this makes the rewriting easier to see. The view of the Highlands is clear, though. It is of a traditional culture that is being attacked, and undermined by modernizing influences.

Some "traditions" are being eaten away and replaced by "modern" practices. The cas chrom, the one-tyned foot plough of the Highlander, has disappeared. This tradition has definitely gone. But the category of tradition itself remains, and in fact, the disappearance of the cas chrom is seen as evidence of decline now. Once an object like this has disappeared it becomes part of tradition, part of what was. But what is disturbing is that it stays and is used as an argument for decline now; in this sense it is part of what is. The cas chrom still exists. At Kilmuir, in the north of Skye, there is a museum devoted to crofting life. It is called a 'Folk Musaum'. It is a taigh dubh (4) with a thatched shed containing an old four-shaft loom next to it. Inside there are two main rooms separated by a boxed-in bedroom. On the walls there are claymores and a decayed set of bagpipes. The curator told me that the building was still a working croft until twenty years ago. Were they really using claymores in the fifties? The problem is that everything has become conflated, the whole of the Highland past is added together and becomes traditional.

This past is used to justify the present. The current decline, the depression and the apathy, are justified by the past glories. Once there was a system of life which was perfectly adapted to its surroundings. "While Hebrideans were dependent on their environment for their whole subsistence a very beautiful ecological adaptation to circumstances took place..." (Darling 1968: 35). However, this "beautiful ecological adaptation" has been attacked by the sheep of the Clearances, and by the deer of the sporting lairds, and so now we have the "sick but surviving culture of Highland Gaeldom" (Darling 1955: 281). The Highlands are seen to be declining; this decline is relative to the Traditional Past. This "sick but surviving culture" represents the remnants of the past, and it is this that constitutes the Highland Problem.

The problem facing those who try to solve the Highland Problem, such as the H.I.D.B., is that if there is a clash of two cultures in the Highlands, on which side should they intervene? Collier, in a book entitled 'The Crofting Problem', said:

"Despite our store of information about the Highlander, there has not been sufficient recognition of the basic issue: to what extent can or ought the Highlands maintain their distinctive qualities of social organisation and outlook in an age of easier intercourse, universal education and economic interpenetration?" (Collier 1953:10).

### The Traditional

The traditional and the modern can be seen as two categories that are in constant competition. Individual elements may change but the categories remain. The crofting system, for example, was once a modern influence, but it is now part of the traditional way of life that must be preserved (see Hunter 1976). Folklore is one of the standard elements of a tradition, and the contents of the category 'folklore' are always declining. ~~People speak of the folklore that must be collected before it disappears.~~ It does not matter what the facts are, what empirical evidence is presented, it is as if 'folklore' were just an empty space. Any fact could be fed into it with the result that it would be thought to be in decline. The idea that Gaelic folklore has only recently started to decline, and that somehow, only a few years ago, everyone sang, danced and told stories is a falsehood, since folklore has always been disappearing. Martin Martin, a gentleman of Skye, for example, wrote in 1703:

"There are several instances of heathenism and pagan superstition among the inhabitants of the islands related here; but I would not have the reader think those practices are chargeable upon the generality of present inhabitants, since only a few of the oldest and most ignorant of the vulgar are guilty of them" (1934:65).

Folklore was disappearing even in the late seventeenth century when Martin toured the Outer Isles.

A very clear example of the way in which the clash between traditional and modern has been controlled is in the case of the pibroch, the grand music of the bagpipes. There are something like three hundred tunes within the canon of pibroch, and these are strictly limited. Very occasionally new tunes are added, but these have to come up to very strict standards. It is said that after the 1745 rebellion the bagpipes, the national instrument of the Highlands, were banned. The only way, therefore, of remembering the old tunes was by a very strict control, under which no variations could be allowed. Thus we have the form of the present day pibroch, of a ground with a series of increasingly complex variations. There are other sorts of pipe music, but pride of place is reserved for the pibroch. This is the height of the art, and the music which outsiders find so hard to appreciate. These tunes must be played with no variation from the traditional way. The justification for this strict, unalterable structure is based upon the eighteenth century turmoil in the Highlands. Only by strict adherence to the traditional method could the national music of the Highlands be preserved. Within the canon of pibroch there can be no modern. There are changes of style-complication for its own sake is not so admired now as it once was - but pibroch itself remains inviolable, stuck in the eighteenth century. It might be possible to play jazz on the bagpipes, but that could never, never, be pibroch.

The bagpipe-playing, kilt-wearing Scot is part of the traditional image of the Highlands. One of the major figures in the establishing of this myth was undoubtedly Sir Walter Scott:

"Scotland will never be able to repay her debt to Sir Walter Scott for his revelation of that glorious region of beauty known as the Trossachs. He not only revealed the beauty of the landscape but he has peopled the district with personalities whose names and deeds will be remembered as long as these scenes remain." (Anon 1931).

It was Scott who revealed the Trossachs. Before Scott the scenery did not exist. This particular guide represents the decay of nineteenth century romanticism to the sickly sweet, yet patronisingly arrogant view of the Highlands on the frontispiece: a picture of two military pipers bordering a pride of Highland terriers, white, furry, and appealing, bounding over the mountainside to welcome the reader to "Scotland: Picturesque and Romantic!"

The idea that at one time the kilt and the bagpipe were part of the everyday life of the Highlander also led Professor Blackie to recommend their use in Highland education. J.S. Blackie was a professor of Greek at Glasgow university who became fascinated by the Highlands, with their traditions. A man who might well have been regarded elsewhere as an eccentric, who thought that Greek had Celtic origins, he was a major figure in the late nineteenth century debate on the Highlanders and their problems. His concern for the true past, for the traditional glories, led him to recommend that in Highland schools:

"Highland subjects will be treated with a national preference - sections of history in which the Gael had performed the principal part will be discussed in fuller detail. Highland songs will be sung in every class, and the most sublime passages of Ossian, along with the beautiful descriptions of scenery in Duncan Ban and Alister MacDonalld will be reited (5) and, perhaps acted in character on show days. Shinty, of course, and every characteristically Highland sport, will be cultivated on holidays. The picturesque, the patriotic, and healthy Highland garb will be worn by all the scholars . . . . With or without the Gaelic language he will grow up a Highlander, as he was born, and present to the world, undisguised and unperv-erted, one of the finest types of manhood that history knows" (Blackie 1877:388).

Blackie thus wished to change the Highlands, to Improve them. His solution to the Highland Problem was to get back to the traditional way of life. This is a common view. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland, it is often said, have been, and still are, bedevilled by Improvers; those who look at the Highland way of life and determine that it is inadequate. There are those who say that the Highlands must be modernised as soon as possible, but the people who complain most are those who follow in the path of Scott and Blackie. They say that the way of life in the Highlands is not what it once was; that it has deteriorated from a once fine and noble state of society to the present state of apathy. It is said that only a century ago the townships were self-sufficient (Gibson 1946:265). Yet one only has to remember the agitation of the 1880's, or the famines of the late 1840's to realise that people have for a long time been complaining in the same way. Wordsworth's arrival at the island of Iona was spoilt by the appearance of beggars, who marred his view of the Traditions.

"How sad a welcome! To each voyager  
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store  
Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore  
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,  
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.

(Wordsworth 'Iona (Upon Landing). 1947:42).

This is the approach of those who would set up a kind of human zoo, where the inhabitants would speak Gaelic, live in black houses, eat potatoes, salted herrings and porrage, and where the tourist and the social scientist could go to study the native with his 'simple' and 'ancient' way of life. It is sad to see people in an apparent state of alcoholic apathy, but it remains necessary to ask why the Highlanders are seen in this way. The traditions of the past are a fundamental feature. Thus when Calum MacLean says that "Life at times was a hard struggle, but the straths and glens did breed a sturdy stock, a race more generously endowed both mentally and physically than the football fans and cinema devotees of our day" (1959:17). It must be realised that he too is a potential Improver, someone who stands outside the Highlands and Islands and judges them to be below standard. With a claymore in his hand the bottle throwing football hooligan is transformed into a noble savage.

## The Highlands.

I have talked so far of the Highlands, or of the inhabitants of the Highlands, without defining exactly what I meant by these terms. This is clearly not a simple geographical category: such ideas as the 'Highland Line' are of little value since they fail to distinguish between "True Highlanders" and those that merely live north of this line. When William Ross, then Secretary of State for Scotland, was announcing the formation of the H.I.D.B. in 1965, he talked of the Highlander as "the man on Scotland's conscience". In order to explain what he meant it is necessary to relate the idea of the Highlander to the traditional.

If we read Calum MacLean's 'The Highlanders' we find that the book chronicles a succession of meetings with old men and women who were the last remaining people in that area to speak Gaelic, but who were, above all else, repositories of tradition. They could remember the folk tales and the songs, the reasons for the names given to all the local landmarks, their grandfathers had been alive at the time of the famine, and so on. The true Highlander is part of tradition, and as such is disappearing too.

This definition of the Highlander has practical results in the field of development policy. If the true Highlander is a rural, traditional beast then there is no way in which a development policy can include, for example, the possibility of urbanisation. The H.I.D.B. implicitly recognised this when they argued that crofting, whilst inefficient, should be maintained since it was part of the traditional way of life.. Francis Thompson has talked of the 'Resurrection of a Culture' (1971) meaning the creation of a Highland society based upon the past. In another article, entitled 'The Optimum Highland Society' he points out quite rightly that the policy of the H.I.D.B. will lead to urbanisation, and that the idea of the urbanised Highlander is a contradiction. Therefore the policies of the H.I.D.B. will lead to the death of Highland culture. Drawing on Plato, Owen and Fourier he says that the Optimum Highland society would be based upon units of no more than 5000 people. Anything larger than this would result in the death of Highland culture.

One of the failures of the H.I.D.B. has lain in the inability to see, or refusal to admit, that a mere statistical increase in population is an insufficient solution to the Highland Problem. On the one hand they claim that their results will be judged by their ability to hold population in the true crofting areas; that is, to maintain the traditional way of life. On the other, they proclaim proudly that the 1971 census showed an increase in population for the first time for over a century. Yet this increase is more than accounted for by the modernised, urbanised, industrialised areas of Easter Ross, Inverness and Lochaber. The "true-crofting areas" are still decreasing in population.

One of the most interesting things that is happening to the category Highlander is its absorption of the idea of the Lowlander, leaving only opposition to the English. This is a movement that was apparent in 1822 when Sir Walter Scott, dressed in a kilt welcomed George IV to Edinburgh. (The fact that Scott had a Campbell great-grandmother is precisely the point). It is apparent in the Prebbles that are in the pockets of every neophyte nationalist. John Prebble's work on the Clearances (1969) itself argues that the exploiters were the Lowlanders, or Highland lairds corrupted by Lowland Scots influences. Now the Lowland Scots' exploitation of the Highlands is used as an argument for nationalism, through the device that Sorley MacLean uses when he talks of "the atom bomb of Anglicised landlord capitalism," when he means the clearances (1969:21 my emphasis).

## Development and Social Change.

The aim of those who attempt to solve the Highland Problem is to cause some social change. There is a problem which needs a solution, which will mean a degree of social change. If Highland society is on the decline, it has to be shown exactly why it appears to be continuously breaking down. Some talk of a "continuity and change", of "conflict and change." The implication of this approach to change is that one day there will be an end to the process. Against this view, I maintain that the Highland way of life is a category, just like folklore, which is always declining. The interesting thing about the decline of the Highland way of life is that people have been talking about it for so long. Folklore is, of course, a perfect example of this since it is always being collected on the point of disappearance. If it were not just about to disappear then it would not be folklore. But this works just as well for economic life. There have been several times when it seemed possible that things might improve, whether through kelp, or fishing, or oil, but all the time people have carried on talking about the Highland Problem, about the inevitable demise of Highland society. One could turn the question round and ask rather "Why has Highland society lasted so long?" The point is that the categories of traditional and modern shift their boundaries but maintain their essential opposition.

The agricultural system provides an example. It is defined as part of the traditional way of life. But the consequence of defining it in this way is that it cannot be changed; and the problem therefore for development agencies is that they are trying to change something which is defined as unchanging. They can, like Gillanders (1962, 1968), insist that the only solution is the operation of harsh economic laws, but then these will destroy the whole category of crofting. The debate on the 1976 Crofting Reform Act has been centred along these lines. The object of the act is to allow crofters, traditionally tenants, to become owner-occupiers. The debate has centred on whether or not the introduction of market forces will destroy crofting. There can be no true reform of the category crofting, since any such reform either leaves crofting unscathed or else destroys it.

## Crofting.

Crofting is the traditional method of agriculture. The H.I.D.B. have stated that whilst crofting may be inefficient it must still be maintained, since it is part of the Highland past that must be preserved. Crofting is a system of agriculture which involves the division of the land around the township among the inhabitants. On this land is grown hay, potatoes and perhaps oats or rye. Around the township is the common grazing, the moorland which is shared by all the crofters of the township. Now, crofting is only said to have been in existence since the nineteenth century, since the clearances. Before that the system of agriculture was that of runrig (see Gray 1952), a system where land was redistributed at intervals.

Yet, according to the Scottish National Dictionary crofting is first recorded in Scotland in the thirteenth century. It was not in fact until the 1870's and 80's (?), long after the Clearances that are supposed to have created crofting, that the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands became synonymous with the term 'Crofter'. The term had existed before; it referred to a tenant, the 'croft' referred to the land around the township. Now crofting refers to the whole system of agriculture. This change in the meaning of the word becomes apparent at the time of the land law reform agitation of the 1880's, when the problems of the Highlands and Islands were to be solved by solving the problems of the crofters. The Crofters' Act of 1886 set up the Crofters' Commission. Suddenly crofting had become the traditional method of agriculture that needed support. The content of the category tradition had changed but the meaning

had remained the same.

The anthropologist and social change in the Highlands.

The anthropologist has long been concerned with small groups, and the need to record their way of life before it disappears. This is the major concern of the anthropologists who have studied the Highlands. Vallee wrote a 'Study of social change' (1954) and Parman wrote of 'Sociocultural Change' (1972). The emphasis has been on social change and the consequent breakdown and disappearance of traditional ways of life.

Parman's thesis "...attempts to explain the seemingly anomalous survival of crofting and crofting communities" (1972:1). Unexpectedly, for her, values are not congruent with those of the wider society. She chronicles the change from self-sufficiency to dependence upon the outside world (ibid:185). She uses a concept of boundedness derived from the work of Barth and argues that:

"the crofting township persists as a relatively strongly bounded system not because it is inherently static, isolated, or resistant of change, but because of the constraints and incentives stemming from the larger society". (ibid:3).

Parman therefore distinguishes between the township and the outside world, and between the self-sufficient system and the current state of affairs, of a decline into dependency. Her idea of change therefore involves taking the social life of Shawbost, a township in Lewis, and separating it into two categories. The one that refers to the old way of life, and is restricted by boundaries imposed by the outside world; and the other which involves connections with the outside world and a decline in self-sufficiency. These categories are therefore the traditional and the modern. To talk of change, in this context, involves a division of events which are happening at any one time into these two categories, followed by the technique of saying that one set of events relates to the past, and one relates to the future. Hence there is a perception of change. This is no more social change than the decline and disappearance of folklore.

Similar comments could be made of Vallee's work on Barra, the southernmost of the Outer Hebrides. His thesis makes use of what he terms a "dual-synchronic" approach. This is the same technique that Parman uses, but in a less sophisticated guise. That is, the comparison is made between two different descriptions of Hebridean social structure, differentiated by time. The first is no more than the mythologised, romanticised past, and the second is the introduction of new elements. The result is a picture of decline. In his article on burial and mourning customs, Vallee again chronicles the recent absorption of Barra into the wider society. He says:

"Many of the traditional cultural practices, extant less than a generation ago, have disappeared or are only rarely observed, It is in the prevalence of the Gaelic language and in the persistence of certain ritual observances that the Barra of today resembles most closely the community of old. Of the ritual practices, none contains more traditional elements than those associated with death and mourning" (ibid:121).

Vallee is studying burial and mourning customs because they are more



traditional, because they contain more traditional elements. This is no more than a doctrine of survivals, a doctrine that was supposedly discarded many years ago.

### The development of the Highlands.

It has been said before, but it bears repeating, that there is a problem over the meaning of the word development. How exactly can the inhabitants of the Highlands improve their social and economic conditions? This is a case where an uncritical empiricism holds sway. Because such figures are easily measurable, the GNP, or the National Income, or in the case of the Highlands the population, are considered to be the only measures of progress. The use of these statistics gives a false aura of accuracy to the debate. There is a too easy satisfaction to be gained merely by the shorthand of measurement. This leads, too, to a variety of economic determinism through the idea that since it is these quantifiable factors which are the indices of growth or progress, then any increase in industry which will lead to an increase in any one of these indices will cause an increase in 'growth', and social progress will be made. Thus kelp, fishing and one suspects, oil, have all been seen as saviours of the Highland way of life. We have the strange spectacle of the social planners being vulgar Marxists. (Friedman 1974).

The problem is that the H.I.D.B. have in no adequate way specified what they are trying to improve, to develop, and what they are doing it for. The Strath of Kildonan report, for example, talks of a desire to develop the area because of its historical background (The Clearances of Sutherland). But there is no coherent idea of what it is that is being socially improved, and despite the initial talk of improving social conditions it soon becomes clear that all that is meant by development is projects with a direct return on capital. (see Carter 1972).

Another result of this economic determinism is that the initial aim of improving social conditions is forgotten. There can be no social philosophy for the economic determinist, except that economic determinism is itself a very rigid social philosophy. This leads to the result that social factors are only considered in so far as they are a hindrance to economic development. And when we do get discussions of social factors, it is of distinctly limited scope.

I have argued that there is something called the traditional Highland way of life. The question facing a development agency is whether or not this way of life is worth preserving. Gillanders (1962:275) complains that, "sentiment and emotion persistently bedevil highland economic analysis".

"The real hope for the highlander today-as I see it - cannot be in tourism, but in the simple courage to implement proved economic principles. The Highlander must cease to regard himself as a member of a chosen race to whom normal economic laws do not apply ....Neither cultural nor spiritual distinctiveness can be maintained much longer unless a sounder basis to the community is devised". (1968:148).

Therefore, "Without reorganisation on a big scale there can be no future for a crofting economy in the Highlands". (1962:265).

But Gillanders has clearly not perceived the fundamental problem, and that is, that just as for Thompson the idea of the urbanised Highlander is a contradiction, so too is the idea of a modernised tradition; that is, crofting subject to "economic laws". This is the double bind that the H.I.D.B. find themselves in. If they try to preserve the traditional way of life then they have to sacrifice economic development, and vice versa. It was this that led them to realise that even though crofting would lead to further depopulation, they had no option but to support it. The problem is that there can be no middle way. The categories traditional and modern do not mix, and they continually shift, taking over new areas of activity. The problem facing the Highlands and Islands Development Board is that they are trying to change something which is previously defined as unchanging. As long as the categories traditional and modern are opposed there can be no solution to the Highland Problem.

### Conclusion.

The Highlands and Islands are said to be going through a period of social change. I have argued that the anthropologists who have studied the area have made this same assumption. They have taken Highland culture and separated it into two elements : the traditional and the modern. The traditional is the idealised past, the myth that was rewritten history so as to give the appearance of decline in the present. The categories traditional and modern are opposed although the content of these categories may change. Thus the 'social change' appears paradoxically to be static. Crofting has become part of the traditional way, and the kelp industry, the fishing industry, and the oil industry will soon be forgotten, just as the kelp, the railways, the hydroelectric schemes have all passed by. As soon as an agency tries to engage in development it gets drawn into this discourse, and thus confronts an insoluble problem.

Ed Condry.

### Notes.

1. Review of Hunter (1976) by "The Quiet Crofter". Stornoway Gazette. 20.11.76.
2. Interestingly enough Defoe too was a government agent. He was sent up north as a government spy at the time of the Union. (see DNB).
3. See e.g. Whitaker (1959).
4. The "traditional" black house of the Highlands and Islands with thick stone walls, and a low thatched roof.
5. ~~A word that is not in the OED, but is presumably related to "reiter", to repeat.~~
6. Quoted in Storey (1974).
7. Alexander MacKenzie, the influential editor of the Celtic Magazine, in an article which stirred up much debate, wrote of the "crofting or lotting system" (1877:449 my emphasis).

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