

CHAPTER IX

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

They make a desert and they call it peace
Galgacus

1. *Differences of attitude*

The Highlands and Islands (that is, the Western Isles) make up about half the total land surface of Scotland. They are, or were, inhabited by the Gaels, a Keltic (or Celtic) people akin to the Gaels of Ireland in blood and language, but also connected, if less closely, with Britons, that is, with the Kelts of Wales. The whole area may be described shortly as 'the Highlands', and its inhabitants are known as 'Highlanders'.

No sensitive Scotsman can view the fate of this region without a tinge of melancholy. Here is half of his country being steadily depopulated with ever increasing acceleration: a language and a way of life which goes back far beyond the Christian era is in danger of being wiped out. Even if he is an unrepentant lowlander, the Highlands are for him part of his own history, and the Gaelic language was once spoken by many of his own ancestors. Why should this land of a fine race be an underdeveloped country? Why should it become a playground for rich Englishmen and Americans? Why can nothing be done that would stop its decay?

This attitude, it must be feared, is to many Englishmen merely a piece of romantic rubbish. Even the most sympathetic of them have been known to congratulate themselves on the way the Highlanders, ever since the Rising of 1745, have been forced to abandon the country and the language that they love in order to settle in the Colonies or America or in Lowland cities (where so many of them died of tuberculosis). Some Englishmen, and even some Anglicised Scots, go so far as to express an open

desire that the old language and the old traditions should disappear for ever. An advanced thinker has even propounded the idea that the best use for the Outer Hebrides would be to turn them into a penal colony.

How is it possible to account for such differences in attitude or to explain the unconcern with which the fate of so large an area of Britain can be viewed in the South?

2. *The English legend*

Part of this unconcern may spring from ignorance of the facts, but such ignorance in turn springs from the lack of concern. It is not usually recognised that in area Scotland is more than half the size of England, even with Wales thrown in. The fate of the Highlands is the fate of at least a sixth part of the total area of Britain and might appear to deserve some consideration; but geography, like history, takes on a special perspective when it is popularly expounded in London – as in the belief that England is an island, and that Britain has no inhabited islands except the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Man.

The main source of the differences between the English and the Scottish attitude appears to be found in the different legends accepted on the two sides of the Border. Popular speakers on the B.B.C. seem to confuse the temporal order with the order of distance from London. We have been told, even by the B.B.C. in Scotland, that the British character is made up of Saxon love of liberty and Norman efficiency. Usually, however, the prevailing view is more liberal. The Angles and the Saxons and the Normans, and even on occasion the Danes, are spoken of as if they were the original inhabitants of these islands. At the tail end of the list there may be a mention of the Britons as if they were late arrivals. When the benefits derived from the Roman occupation of Britain are extolled, it seems to be forgotten that if these benefits reached the Anglo-Saxons at all, it must have been through the Britons whom they are supposed to have massacred. The Gaels are still more dimly described, if they are described at all – they are too far North. Their disappearance would leave the average Englishman unconscious of any loss, though it is he who ultimately decides

their fate. The rush of a few thousand Highlanders to Derby is known to have caused something like a panic in London in 1745, but otherwise they form no part of 'British' history. So far as they English legend is dimly aware of their existence, they appear as primitive barbarians without a past as they are without a future. Even in the North of England, which ought to know better, a gentleman on the radio who politely compares them with Bantus can meet with hilarious approval. One of the 'indubitable facts' of British history is that St. Augustine of Canterbury was the first to introduce culture and religion into a land of savages.

It should be unnecessary to mention, or to criticise, this English legend were it not for its effect on present attitudes towards the Highlands. No one acquainted with these dignified and courteous people can regard them as mere barbarians. Even in their decay they have their magic songs and proud dances, which are among the best indications of racial character. Many of them still show a command of language, even in English, and a liveliness of imagination which mark them out from other people. There should in any case be no need to delve into past history in order to claim for the earliest inhabitants of these islands the ordinary rights of human beings to continue their own way of life in their own country. In view of past injustices they would seem entitled to all the help and sympathy they can be given.

Such at least is the view widely held in Scotland. Why should it seem alien or unreasonable to our English brothers?

3. *The Scottish legend*

Only a detailed historical account could dispose of the English legend. Here it can merely be noted that history, like geography, appears very different when viewed from different sides of the Border.

According to the Scottish legend the Gaels belong to the Keltic peoples who dominated northern Europe for centuries before the Christian era and penetrated even as far as Asia Minor in the East and Spain in the West. Whatever civilisation

there was in Europe outside the Greco-Roman world belonged to them. Something of their pride and chivalry peers out occasionally even in the dry pages of Julius Caesar. It would not be too difficult to trace similar qualities in their kinsmen who settled in the British Islands, qualities which have persisted down to the present day.

It is only too easy to find savagery in others and to ignore it in ourselves. There was plenty of savagery in the tribal warfare of the Gael; but was it any worse than the savagery found in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, not to mention that of later times? Even to-day civilised nations sink easily into barbarism in time of war, as can be seen in the cruelties of the German Nazis and more recently in the ruthlessness of some Frenchmen in Algeria. In time of peace and in a supremely civilised society like Eighteenth-Century France, ladies and gentlemen crowded to see criminals, real or alleged, being broken on the wheel or torn apart by wild horses. It is impossible to estimate a nation or race solely on the grounds of its deviations into savagery. Any one who knows the Gaels to-day will be struck, not by their brutality, but by a curious kind of gentleness.

As to the origin of culture and religion, the English legend again seems to fall into confusion about the temporal order of events. It is apt to forget that three British bishops attended the Council of Arles in A.D. 324 – long before the Angles and Saxons had arrived in Britain. Places remote from London, like Ireland and Scotland, had become Christian years before the coming of Augustine, and their Gaelic missionaries had already converted the Angles of the North, not to mention considerable parts of Germany.

Even after Augustine came, many of these Angles still looked to Ireland and Scotland for their culture and religion. His mission was primarily to the heathen Anglo-Saxons in the neighbourhood of London at a time when there already existed a flourishing British Church. By a display of the pride for which he was notorious he succeeded in alienating the British clergy in spite of their humility and willingness to learn – in their simplicity they had imagined that pride was incompatible with Christianity. If he did not actually encourage his heathen

friends to massacre them, his threats and prophecies were not calculated to act as a restraint.

A comparison of ancient legends is not very profitable even if their influence persists to the present day; but the Scottish legend at least calls attention to possible gaps in the English one. Let us turn to more recent events in which may be found the origin of the present unhappy situation.

4. *Culloden*

Although it is undesirable to dwell on past wrongs, yet in face of the complacent assumption that the Treaty of Union proved an unmixed blessing to Scotland and to the Highlands, it may not be out of place to refer briefly to Culloden. A recent book on this subject by Mr. John Prebble, an Englishman brought up in Canada, should be consulted by any one who wishes to know what happened. According to this detached historian it was here that there began the sickness from which Scotland, and the Highlands in particular, have never recovered.

In the year 1745, it will be remembered, some five thousand Highlanders got as far south as Derby in a misguided attempt to regain the crown for the Stuart dynasty. After defeating the few Hanoverian troops in Scotland they had rather unwillingly crossed the Border in the hope of English support, of which they got very little except for a few hundred men from Manchester. On the other hand, there was very little fighting in England, and the conduct of these barbarians seems, at the least, to have been no worse than that of other armies in this relatively civilised century. They were finally driven back to the North and were heavily defeated at Culloden by a Hanoverian army under the Duke of Cumberland.

The deliberate butchery of the wounded, both during the battle and after it, was bad enough in itself. What was far worse was the Hanoverian brutality which went on and on in a way that sickened the whole of Scotland. Houses were burned down with little regard to the distinction between friend and foe; the china and silver and wine of the barbarians were looted; the corn was destroyed; the cattle were driven off and sold; the women and children were left to starve where they

were not raped and killed. It may be doubted whether the Highlands in all their long history had seen so much savagery practised with such cold-blooded determination and efficiency.

The army which committed these outrages was not an undisciplined one: it suffered rather from an excess of discipline. Up to 1500 lashes could be inflicted as a punishment – a soldier might have as many as 500 in one day. The women of the army came under the same orders, the same lash and drum-beat, as the men. By the orders of Cumberland, soldiers' wives were whipped for giving or selling food to starving Highlanders, even to women.

The prisoners taken were treated with great severity, especially by the officers, some of whom, it may be noted, were Scotsmen. Those who were gaoled were allowed no fires or candles in the depth of winter. In order that they might be judged by English law in English courts they were taken south in transports where cruelty and torture prevailed, as if the natural hardships were not severe enough in themselves. Even after they reached London the conditions under which they were held improved little, if at all. A few noblemen were taken to Westminster Hall to be bullied and insulted and in the end beheaded; but the common punishment for the remainder was the usual obscene hanging and drawing and quartering. The lucky ones were those who were transported to plantations in America, where they were treated more or less as slaves.

It was the citizens of London, to their credit be it said, who gave to Cumberland the name of 'Butcher', when they became at least dimly aware of what was happening.

Apart from the organised savagery used against the rebels, Cumberland and other English generals like the Earl of Albemarle displayed an extraordinary attitude even to the loyal clans and indeed to Scotland as a whole. In breach of the Treaty of Union they overrode Scots Law even in the Lowlands and treated the whole of Scotland as a rebellious and conquered country. They seem to have regarded all Scotsmen as rogues, even those most loyal to King George II. When Duncan Forbes, the Lord President of the College of Justice, suggested to Cumberland that the laws of the country should be tempered

with princely mercy, he was given the polite reply: 'Laws! I'll make a brigade give the laws.' Cumberland even said of this wise and reasonable man that he was as 'arrant Highland mad' as certain other Scottish noblemen, who presumably had made similar remonstrances. This conforms to the traditional practice whereby the most modest and reasonable of Scottish criticisms are swept aside as a mark of insanity.

Culloden is no longer among the battle honours of any British regiment, but the subsidiary title 'Baron Culloden' can still be given to a Royal Prince – so little consideration for Scottish sentiment, Highland and Lowland alike, is to be found among the English advisers of the Crown.

5. *The aftermath*

The oppression of the Highlanders did not end with the massacres immediately after the battle. Six years later General Wolfe tells us that he deliberately sent out a weak detachment of soldiers to take a political prisoner, in the hope that it might be destroyed in an attempt at rescue, 'thus providing an excuse to extirpate the local population "*sans miséricorde*". He had described the Highlanders as 'the secret enemy' and apparently considered that even at this late date the most infamous methods of repression were completely justified.

How little foundation there was for his suspicions was shown by the actions of the exiled Highlanders who were trying to build up a new life for themselves in the plantations of Carolina. In the American War of Independence they were unwise enough to take up arms on behalf of George the Third, having been urged to this course by no less a person than Flora Macdonald, the heroine who had done so much to help Charles Stuart in his escape. For their misguided loyalty they suffered what may almost be described as a second Culloden, and once again had their property confiscated and their language proscribed.

Perhaps even more revealing is the observation of General Wolfe about the Highland soldiers serving later under his own command: 'They are hardy, intrepid . . . and no great mischief if they fall.'

From a government which shared anything of this spirit no

justice could be expected, let alone generosity. All the Highland clans, loyal and rebellious alike, were subjected to the same harsh and humiliating laws. The wearing of the Highland dress, and even of the tartan, was everywhere prohibited – the penalty for a first offence was six months in gaol, and for a second offence transportation for life. The poor clansmen who had no other clothes were forced to ludicrous makeshifts which could only make them figures of fun. Nothing could have been devised more galling to their Highland pride. Even the bagpipe was suppressed as 'an instrument of war'. It could be wished that modern instruments of war were no more lethal.

6. *The Highland Clearances*

According to Mr. Prebble it was by merciless brutality that the Highlands were subdued, the glens emptied, and the clans destroyed. Yet such is the resilience of human nature that the Highlanders were able to rally after this time of oppression. The subsequent decay was gradual and was caused mainly by measures which, even if not unreasonable in themselves, failed to take into account the economic effects of an abrupt change from the old patriarchal system to one entirely different.

Thus it seems reasonable that the chiefs should be deprived of their hereditary right to administer justice, a right not always exercised without corruption and even brutality. Unfortunately the new system of law altered their status from that of a semi-military chief managing the estates of a ramified family to that of an ordinary landed proprietor. As the chief was subtly transformed into a laird, his clansmen became mere tenants holding their crofts on disadvantageous terms and without security of tenure.

The result was the tragedy of the Highland Clearances. The new lairds, and still more those to whom they sold their land, too often became absentee landlords, if this term may be applied even to gentlemen who have offices in London; but whatever their location they discovered that sheep were more profitable than men. In order to convert their estates into sheep runs they proceeded to turn thousands of their tenants out of their crofts.

This new policy of evictions was far more devastating than the occasional oppression of a hereditary chief, and it was followed with increasing ruthlessness well into the Nineteenth Century.

It is impossible to find reliable figures, but it has been claimed that hundreds of thousands of men and women and children were driven from their homes, hundreds of hamlets were destroyed, and thousands of acres were thrown out of cultivation. The process began on a really large scale about 1762 and reached its climax in the thirties and forties of the following century with the great clearances in Ross and Sutherland. Without regard to age or health men and women had their cottages burned over their heads and had to lie in the open fields during the worst of a Highland winter. They were allowed to squat in wretched huts on the sea-shore or to sail for Canada in ships where many of them died of cholera. On the top of this followed the famine of 1846 when over 300,000 people were on the verge of starvation and entirely dependent on charity from Edinburgh and Glasgow. As late as 1851 some 450 crofter families were induced by false promises to sail from South Uist for Canada. Those who refused to go, even shrieking adolescent girls, were dragged on board by brute force.

The astonishing thing is that all this was endured with so little resistance by a fierce and proud race. Perhaps they had been cowed by Culloden and its aftermath, but some writers suggest that many of their fighting men were abroad serving as soldiers in the British army. If so, they received a poor reward.

It is commonly believed that the Highlands were cleared to make room for deer forests, but this was a later development, which began in the 1870's after sheep-rearing became less profitable as a result of Australian competition. In a land where hunting, shooting, and fishing had been almost free for all there were nearly two million acres of deer forest by 1883. In 1912 the total had grown to over three and a half million acres, of which a million and a half had been scheduled by a Royal Commission as fit for agriculture. It was not till the end of the Nineteenth Century that the British Government began to show some concern for the damage done by all this wastage and

injustice. But when decay has gone far enough, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to arrest it.

These extraordinary happenings have not been without apologists. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the humane authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was induced by her aristocratic friends to defend the worst proceedings in Sutherland. Even to-day we hear voices innocently proclaiming that the landlords were moved by purely humanitarian motives: they sought to rescue their tenants from a life of poverty, and it was only a fortunate coincidence that the profits to be obtained from sheep happened to become known at the same time. But however noble their motives, the methods employed were outrageous and the results devastating. It is bad enough that so much land has been lost which once produced food and could do so again, as recent experiments have shown. It is far worse that so many of the oldest and finest stock in our country should have been forced to leave their native land for ever.

It would be tedious to recount the minor disadvantages under which the Highlands and Islands have suffered, and indeed still suffer in spite of all attempts at amelioration. If too simple a generalisation may be forgiven, the traditional crofter depended for his livelihood, not only on farming his tiny plot and keeping a few livestock, but also on inshore fishing and on weaving. This simple, yet varied life, if it was far from luxurious, may seem to some of us to be in some ways more rounded and satisfying than the nervous specialisation of modern cities. But how could this be understood by London politicians and officials? The crofters have at last been made more secure in the tenure of their land, but they cannot live on this alone. Their inshore fishing was made unprofitable even during the present century by a policy which, unlike that followed by Norway and Iceland, has allowed foreign trawlers to denude some of the richest fishing grounds in the world. More recently the market for their famous tweeds was damaged by imposing a purchase tax on so-called luxury goods. The lack of adequate roads and railways and shipping, the neglect and abandonment of the old piers, and the ever increasing cost of transport, have made the sale of local products more and more difficult and raised all

prices for people already living near to the bone. It is even claimed – though this may be more doubtful – that in spite of paying the usual taxes they are deprived of benefits from the Welfare State because southern officials are accustomed to deal only with workers confined to a single job.

All of these charges, and many others like them, may be subject to some qualification. What remains certain is that, in spite of efforts to check it, the process of depopulation goes on and on.

7. *The rocket range in South Uist*

Even to-day the Highland way of life is exposed to new assaults from an uncomprehending British Government. The main centres of Gaelic culture are now to be found in the Outer Hebrides. South Uist in particular has, or had, a strong Highland community, where Gaelic is still the main language and might be expected to survive for some generations. Furthermore it enjoyed, what is not too common in the Highlands, considerable stretches of good arable land, known as the 'machair'. This was one of the few places never fully penetrated by the Reformation, and many of the crofters there are Roman Catholics, a living relic of the mediaeval Scottish Church and perhaps even of the earlier Keltic Church itself.

As infallibly as the needle to the pole, it was to this region that the Government turned when it decided that it must have a rocket range at home instead of overseas. This was the only possible site – all other sites having been rejected after careful consideration, no details of which were ever given. What was more, even within the island the only place where the range could be built was the *machair* land, on which the prosperity of the inhabitants depended. The crofters would of course be compensated, and the immense sum of £20,000,000 to be spent could not fail to benefit the islanders. The customary bland assurances were given that invasion by large numbers of purely English-speaking workers and service men would in no way affect the traditions and language of the original inhabitants. In any case the defence of Britain would be hopelessly crippled

unless we had rockets 'Breaking the silence of the seas among the farthest Hebrides'.

There was the usual outcry from the islanders and from other Scotsmen convinced that the last remnants of their age-long tradition were to be destroyed. In spite of able support from prominent Roman Catholics the outcry fell on deaf ears. The earliest inhabitants of these islands were lectured on the nature of British patriotism, even by gentlemen whose names suggested they were recent arrivals determined to be more English than the English. We all had to make sacrifices, and Scotland could be no exception. What never emerged was the slightest understanding of how great this particular sacrifice was.

Meanwhile the scheme, in spite of becoming ever more modest, seemed to require more and more of the fertile land. The £20,000,000 was soon reduced to £5,000,000. It was even doubted whether the whole project might not speedily become superfluous since the improved rockets of the future may require testing grounds measured, not in hundreds, but in thousands of miles. If the whole scheme is to be abandoned after a few years, the mischief will already have been done. If, as some hold, the crofters who have lost their land and sold their stock will have to emigrate, the chances are that they will never return. The community is most unlikely to recover its former prosperity and certain to lose its ancient innocence.

The School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh urged that at least some attempt should be made to record the speech and songs and traditions of the island before they had been corrupted by the new invasion. Their appeal for a small grant to help them in this endeavour was rejected by the Secretary of State: he was simple enough to think that this upheaval would not have any marked effect on the local traditions. Fortunately a Norwegian professor of Keltic Languages regarded this reply as irresponsible and condemned the whole policy as an act of barbarism. He came to the rescue by persuading the University of Oslo to give him a grant so that he might carry out some studies before it was too late. The charity of a foreign university had to supply the sympathy and help refused by the British Government.

8. *The need for change*

It would give a false impression not to recognise that during the last sixty years or so something has been done to ameliorate the position of the crofters throughout the Highlands as a whole. Their tenure has been improved, and there is a Land Court to which they may appeal. There is a special Crofters Commission; and indeed there has been a superabundance of commissions and committees and panels to enquire and advise and recommend. The North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, in spite of jealous suspicion from the South, has brought electricity to many parts, and the Forestry Commission has also done something to help. But, in spite of all this, depopulation and unemployment continue, and the problem remains unsolved.

A problem like this cannot be tackled by a conglomeration of Government Departments, some of which are in Edinburgh and some in London, so that co-operation between them becomes even more difficult than it would be otherwise. Always we find the same reluctance of Whitehall to recognise that Scotland has special problems to be met and overcome; and this is made all the more difficult because English Members of Parliament find it difficult to understand how principles and regulations admirably suited to the Home Counties can be devastating when applied to a wholly different situation in the North. It may – to give only one example – seem reasonable in England that the Government grant to support the rating system should vary with the population; but where there is a vast county with a small and declining population, the result may be catastrophic. The grant to Inverness-shire was savagely cut when the population fell below an arbitrary figure. The effect of this can be only worse services, higher rates, and further depopulation, which will lead in turn to further reductions in the grant, and so on indefinitely. What good the Government does with one hand it may easily undo with the other.

The obvious need to deal with the problem as a whole is so great that heroic measures may be required. Instead of the present chaotic system there should be a single authority with wide powers and with adequate finance which could be used without

continual reference to London. It has been claimed that the Highland and Islands Development Board set up in 1965 will meet these requirements. It has some good men on it, and we must wish it well; but the omens are not too favourable, and we have still to see how it will work out in practice. The so-called Highland Fund, a small private organisation hampered by interference from the Board of Trade, has already shown how much can be done, even with grossly inadequate funds, by men who know the country. But what can be achieved against the rigid policies of Government departments working in the opposite direction? If, for example, the children of the glens are directed at a tender age to pursue higher education far away in the hostels or lodgings of strange towns, their parents will inevitably follow and no parents of young children will come to take their place. Even the green and happy isle of Arran seems destined in the long run to become a home for the aged and childless.

9. *'Why are you sleep?'*

The usual answer to all this is that the land is too poor to be developed. Something like half the total extent of Scotland is now devoted to grouse moors. It seems rather a lot, but we are sometimes told we must be content to leave this vast area as an undeveloped country and – during a few months of the year – a paradise for affluent sportsmen, who come mainly from the South of England or even from America and Western Germany.

Such a contention must be received with some scepticism. Large sporting estates in the Highlands may change hands at colossal prices – one of these was sold in 1961 for £420,000 – but this does little to help the local inhabitants. In spite of some outstanding exceptions both Scottish and English, there are many landlords, whether absentee or otherwise, who do not want the country to be fully developed – some of them, it is said, congratulate those who have no crofters on their land. English politicians whose only knowledge of Scotland is acquired during their annual visit to the grouse moors in August may receive a somewhat one-sided view of the situation.

It is true that the Highlands in many places are not well adapted to the growing of grain, and land which has been long neglected is bound to deteriorate. Yet the glens used to support a much larger population when methods of agriculture were more primitive than they are to-day. They also used to rear many cattle, and recent experiments show that they could do so again, to the great advantage of Scotland and of Britain as a whole. Modern science is developing methods for making peat-land into pastures, and the modest application of these methods in the Highlands has already met with some success. The area as a whole is said to be the best in Europe for the growing of conifers, and with the necessary pulp-mills it could save the heavy cost of British imports from Scandinavia. Here in the modern jargon we have a region of 'unrealised potential'. The situation might be transformed with more research and with an adequate system of transport; but the Highlands are at present too poor to provide all this for themselves.

All this may be dismissed as wishful thinking. Those who accept such a view ought to study what has happened, and is happening, in Norway. With a population much less than that of Scotland, with far fewer natural resources and with a much more rugged climate, the Norwegians have succeeded in bringing prosperity to regions of their own country much more difficult than anything to be found in the Highlands and Islands. They have done this – through their government – by research and technology, by providing cheap and adequate transport, by granting loans to enterprising individuals on the security of their character alone, and by excluding foreign trawlers from their fiords in the teeth of obstinate British opposition. Much of the land is owned and farmed successfully by small peasants to the great advantage of the country as a whole. They are amazed to find that the very opposite policy has been followed in the Highlands – a policy, as it seems to them, of madness. Their amazement has been well expressed by a simple Norwegian skipper: 'Scottish people I do not understand. If my country owned these islands, we should all be rich, everybody, fishermen, farmers, shopkeepers, everybody. Why are you sleep? Such a terrible waste!'

Why indeed are you sleep? The obvious answer might seem to be that, unlike Norway, Scotland has no real control over her own affairs. She is hampered and thwarted at every turn by a lopsided and top-heavy system of administration which is not adapted to her needs. The complacency of the English in these matters is sometimes hard to bear. On their view they have benevolently brought the advantages of English civilisation to untutored barbarians. If anything is wrong, this must be ascribed to the inhabitants or to the climate or to the nature of the soil – never to more than two hundred years of neglect and misgovernment.

It is becoming common form to say, in irritation or in pity, that Scotsmen are always asking for help, when all they are asking for is the power to use some of their own money to make good the damage inflicted on them in the past. But the problem here goes far deeper than the doling out of financial favours or distributing them in a juster way. Is it not a loss to the whole of Britain that a vast tract of territory should fall into ruin? The loss is spiritual as well as material; but even if the English care nothing for Highland traditions and Gaelic culture, can they still say with General Wolfe of some of the best sailors and soldiers in the world 'it is no great mischief if they fall'. Is it impossible for them to follow the Norwegian example and consider the interests of our country as a whole? Can we not hope that even at this late date they might open their eyes and look at the situation from a British, and not just a narrowly London, point of view?

The lost men and women will never return, and the Gaelic language and tradition may disappear for ever, but at least in terms of a modest economic prosperity it is hard to believe that Scotland, if given the power, could not do what Norway has already done.