

Monday afternoon, and though it was not so numerously attended as we could have wished, yet no doubt the substance of our addresses would be carried through among the people.

On Tuesday we came to Portree, the only town in the Island, taking advantage of a religious service to be held there. Here we had a very good meeting, at which we spoke at length on the scheme. The Sheriff and some of the principal people were present. The Sheriff seemed to think that good as the scheme was, it was barely workable, unless the people were helped in the matter of outfit, &c., telling us of a former emigration scheme (to Canada), which cost the country several thousand pounds. More than once we were told that it was quite impossible for the people to pay down £5 per adult.

At Portree we met the Rev. Mr. Macrae, a venerable Free Church clergyman from the Lewis, Sir James Matheson's property. He said that if we could have gone to Stornoway (the chief town in Lewis), we should have had a very large meeting indeed, particularly if it were known that we would begin by conducting divine service. This, of course, we should have gladly done, but it was quite impossible for us to arrange for going so far. Had it been at all convenient I should have arranged it, though I might have had to draw a little more money to cover the additional expense. Besides the season was not so very suitable, owing to many of the people being away to the fishing on different parts of the Scotch and Irish coast; for very many who have small patches of land, fish during the season. Of course, this applies to Skye also; still, as Mr. Bruce and I could not go at any other season, perhaps it was better we should go so far than not go at all.

From Portree we came to Steat, in the extreme south of the Island, where we had a small meeting in the Free Church of which the Rev. J. S. Macphail is minister.

Thence we came to Strome Ferry, on the Mainland, at the west termination of the Dingwall and Skye Railway. Hiring a boat we went down to Plockton. Although our coming was not known, a very good meeting was speedily convened. Here we met Mr. F. Macdonnell to whom I had written at Mr. Morrison's request in May. I believe, from what he told me was done there, that in that quarter considerable help would be given, that so many of the people might be able to leave.

Thence we came to Inverness. I thought we might have had a meeting at Culloden, but the harvest season is a bad time for such meetings; and besides, Culloden said his people had been leaving faster than he wished. However, I heard in Inverness that it was likely a good many immigrants might be got from Invermoriston on Lochness side. I called on Mr. Sinclair, the factor, but missed him. The proprietor is a minor, but I believe his mother and guardians are desirous to improve the property; and I am given to understand that while there is no wish to depopulate the district, there are more people than can procure a decent subsistence.

I rather think a good many immigrants might be obtained in Banffshire and Aberdeenshire. I had conversations with various people on the subject; but it was impossible to hold any meetings, as every one was busy at harvest. I was told that if I could come back in two months or less, I might have very well attended meetings, and work might be done. To sum up—

1. The people, especially in the Highlands and Islands, are so lamentably poor that it is quite impossible for them to pay down £5 per adult. This is the first proposal. In a recent letter to me from the New Zealand Agency Office, it is ruled that each adult pay £2 10s. additional during his first year in the Colony. It seems to me that it would be wise to reverse this, and ask payment of £2 10s. here, and £5 afterwards. I am sorry we did not know of the new proposal before we went to Skye, the terms being now less favourable than those we felt ourselves at liberty from former communications to propose.

2. From the extreme desire that Scotch people have to possess a bit of land, and from the not ill-founded idea that land grants would be attainable (though more wisely devised than the Auckland scheme of former years), Mr. Bruce held out the great probability—not the certainty—of such land grants being obtained. In this we may have gone beyond our commission, but I cannot fancy much harm has been done. I still think such a scheme would be a chief means of inducing many to go; and if the land could not be granted freely, it might be valued at 10s. or £1 per acre. Moreover, as the people are clannish, it would help the immigration scheme if 1,000 acres could be allocated for 100 families, who should be bound to cultivate a certain proportion within a certain time. A school could be at once set up by Government, and the home churches must provide a clergyman. Whereas if Gaelic people were scattered over a Province, such as Canterbury, it would be much more difficult to provide for them in this way than even in the case of others. There are, no doubt, some objections to locate so many in one place, but the advantages would be very many. They could engage easily on all public works within ten or twelve miles, and a large proportion of them, especially of the younger people, would engage in service or in public works over the country.

3. I had the idea that it would be well if a ship could be brought round to the sheltered bay at Isle Ornsay in Skye, not far from Plockton. But I am led to understand that this might be objected to by insurance agents, &c. If such objections could be overruled it would be well, for thus the poor people would be saved much expense and trouble. But if this cannot be, then the ship should be laid on in Glasgow.

4. It will be necessary to set forth the scheme very clearly, and it might be advisable to translate the whole into Gaelic. Then agents must be appointed who can always be on the spot to keep the scheme before the eye of the public, to invite and receive applicants, &c. I would advise that Mr. A. Macdonald, National Bank, Portree, should be appointed for Skye. If he cannot act himself he can get a substitute. Mr. Farquhar Macdonnell should be appointed for Plockton, on the West Coast, for Lochalsh, &c. Mr. Sinclair, factor on Invermoriston, Inverness, should be written to anent emigration from Lochness side. My brother, Mr. Barclay, Aberdour House, would probably consent to act for Aberdeenshire. An agent at Turriff, a thriving village with four banks, &c., in the midst of a rich agricultural district, might do good service. My brother could probably recommend some one to act as local agent there.

5. The proprietors in the Highlands should be consulted, such as Sir James Matheson, of the Lewis; Mr. Matheson, of Ardrross; Captain Fraser, of Uig, in Skye; also, Macleod of Dunvegan, and Lord Macdonald. There is also a Mr. Ramsay, in Islay, who recently removed about 300 people