

5/3/14

REV. COLIN MACDONALD IN
NAIRN.A POPULAR LECTURE AND ELOQUENT
SERMON.

THE Rev. Colin Macdonald, Rogart, gave a lecture on "Some Features and Tendencies in the Highlands," on Friday of last week, in Nairn, on the invitation of the Literary Society there. Mr Blackhall, banker, president of the Society, was in the chair, and in very complimentary terms introduced the lecturer, who had a hearty reception and was frequently applauded. On the motion of Mr Robertson, factor for Cawdor, who spoke in very appreciative terms of the lecture and the lecturer, Mr Macdonald was cordially thanked. Mr Macdonald conducted the services in Nairn Parish Church on Sunday, and there was a large congregation.

BRORA NOTES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "THE NORTHERN TIMES."]

SIR,—If the "Exiles" visit Kildonan and if Mr Murdoch comes along with them, we shall give them all a very hearty welcome. We, like other civilized people, fight like cat and dog among ourselves, but when friends from afar visit us we lay aside our weapons of war and behave as if no such words as Radical and Tory were in existence. That Radical rascal whom I have belaboured for the past twelve months is now sitting in a chastened mood beside me as I write and he vows that he will have a "day of it" when the "Exiles" come north. I believe him, for there is no mischief that he is not up to when he gets what he calls "the right sort of people" to join him. "The right sort of people" are the pests who talk for ever about getting land for the people and who at the same time do everything in their power to irritate those who have land to give. I am not alone in thinking that the land question in Sutherland would have been settled twenty years ago, as far as it was possible and practicable to settle it, but for the action of astute politicians who exploited the simple-minded crofters in their own selfish interests. So far as we in Sutherland are concerned the land question is purely a money question and to talk of land for the people without providing the people with money to stock the land, is to talk sheer nonsense. And even if the money were available there are difficulties to encounter. It is very easy to spout on a platform and shout "back to the land," but back to the land is where the majority do not want to go. If crofts or small holdings were offered for nothing in Kildonan I am doubtful if half-a-dozen men could be found to take them up, and even if the half dozen turned up we would probably find that they were half-a-dozen fools whom their neighbours would be glad to get rid of.

But it is possible to give land to the

SUTHERLAND FIARS PRICES.

A QUESTION AS TO PROCEDURE.

JURY RECOMMEND THAT NO CHANGE BE
MADE.

THE routine work of fixing the Fiars prices for Sutherland was enlivened (before Sheriff Campbell at Dornoch on Tuesday) by brief discussions regarding the natural weight of the crop and the standard weight. The standard weight for distilling purposes is fixed at 56 lbs., while the natural weight varied from 53 lbs. to 57 lbs. per bushel. Another question as to the procedure in giving evidence was raised by Mr J. H. Arthur, solicitor, Dornoch, who represented the Presbytery of Dornoch. Mr Arthur said it had been suggested at a conference between the parties interested that the evidence of the transactions by the sellers should be given by the sellers as well as by the purchasers. In adopting this course the Sutherland Court would merely be following the practice in other sheriffdoms, and be on the lines of the proposed legislation.

Sheriff Campbell—Do you mean that the evidence of the seller might be led to check the evidence of the buyer?

Mr Arthur—Oh, no! I do not mean to suggest that the buyer's evidence should be checked. The system I propose you to follow is laid down in the Act of Sederunt.

Sheriff Campbell—In some instances here to-day we had evidence from the sellers as well as the buyer. It is very difficult to make alteration upon use and wont. I am afraid it is not in my power to make modifications. Alterations would require to be made by the Sheriff-Principal or by legislation.

Mr A. N. Macaulay, solicitor, Golspie, said he represented the principal heritor. The system they had followed that day had been in force for over half a century, and had worked satisfactorily as far as the ministers and all others interested were concerned. He submitted that through the evidence led the jury were enabled to arrive as near as possible at the correct figures. He saw no good reason why the present system should not be continued.

Sheriff Campbell remarked that any change would have to be given effect to through the Sheriff-Principal. He had been looking into the matter and found that it had been discussed as far back as 1832, but up to the present time no fresh legislation had been passed, although there was talk of doing something from time to time.

Mr Arthur remarked that Mr Macaulay should have made it clear who was the principal heritor he represented. At the conference the other day the principal heritor was represented by his Factor who agreed to the proposal to lay the matter before the court.

Mr Macaulay—My friend need have no misunderstanding as to whom I represent. I usually represent the principal heritor at

THE JOURNALIST AND THE
STATE.

Sir Edward Russel presided on Saturday at the annual meeting of the Newspaper Press Fund, held at Garrick Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. In moving the adoption of the report and accounts the Chairman said that since the inauguration of the fund £88,555 had been disbursed in grants and pensions. The net membership of the fund had increased during the year by 148, and there were now about 2600 names on the roll. All that prosperity was necessarily accompanied by more demands, and the grants and pensions during the year amounted to £6168, which was £1000 more than had been disbursed in any one year previously. He congratulated the fund on the reasonableness and smallness of the cost of administering the fund, which amounted last year to not more than 10.9 per cent. of the claims paid, and in spite of the increased demands there was no diminution of the capital, which had increased to £67,450. There would be added this year the balance due from the Sir John Willox Fund, which meant that the council would have a further sum of £1500 to invest.

Referring to the fact that the Prime Minister had promised to preside at the next dinner of the fund, Sir Edward said that he personally regarded it as most interesting to have a gentleman at their dinner who struck the public imagination, and who by his presence and by his words and his influence added to the estimation in which the press was held in England. He was no less pleased that Sir Edward proceeded, among those journalists who thought that that was an unimportant matter, for he believed that it was a very serious thing, especially in regard to the relations with the judiciary of the country. Much was due from the State to the profession, for its members performed a necessary function without which civilisation would have to stop, and in the performance of which the press ran incalculable risks, with the result that very often they were innocently brought into very tight places. The time had now come, Sir Edward continued, when the law of the land should recognise the necessity of their function to the State, and the press ought to be more protected by the Legislature than they were. (Hear, hear.) They should be liable to be brought into inconvenient or costly disaster from circumstances over which they very often had no control, and also under circumstances when they had done nothing more than the duty which from their conscience, they were bound to do for the sake of community.

Replying to a vote of thanks, the Chairman remarked that a fairly long experience had taught him that a great many journalists did not get prosperity because they did not expect it.

The report was adopted.

The election of members of the council of the fund resulted as follows:—C. New