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## Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for October 26th, 2018

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<https://electricscotland.com/scotnews.htm>

### Electric Scotland News

Well I do admit I almost fell asleep during my last video introduction so hopefully I'll do much better this time around.

In actual fact I am having a lot of sleep issues of late. While I usually go to bed around midnight it can be 4 or 5 in the morning before I actually get to sleep. I usually get up around 10.30 or 11.00 so usually get up to 6 hours sleep or at least partial sleep as I often wake up earlier but can then doze of again for a bit.

As a small boy I always found it difficult to get to sleep and that has continued all my life. This means I have been in the habit of reading a book until I can't keep my eyes open but even then it can be an hour or so before I actually get to sleep.

As I've got older I now find that after my dinner I usually watch something on the TV and usually doze of for around half an hour.

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I note that St. Andrews Day is getting near so do watch out for St. Andrew's dinner dances being announced in your area and perhaps book a table for you and your partner.

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Here is the video introduction to this newsletter...

<https://youtu.be/Rkm4DKeSX-k>

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

Note that this is a selection and more can be read in our [ScotNews](#) feed on our index page where we list news from the past 1-2 weeks. I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines. I might also add that in newspapers such as the Guardian, Scotsman, Courier, etc. you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish.

Will lab-grown meat really change the future of food?

A lab-grown burger could soon cost as little as £8

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/will-lab-grown-meat-really-change-the-future-of-food>

SNP's Quango Queen is not alone on gravy train

The piquant revelation that Scotland's erstwhile Quango Queen was paid to work more days in a year than actually exist highlights why the whole system is so tarnished.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/brian-wilson-snp-s-quango-queen-is-not-alone-on-gravy-train-1-4817470>

The Treasury's policy-based evidence making on Brexit has got to stop

It is clearly unacceptable that key economic decision-making about the future of this country's economy depends on a 'work in progress' model by the Treasury

Read more at:

<https://brexitcentral.com/treasurys-policy-based-evidence-making-brexit-got-stop/>

Scottish NHS performance continuing to decline

The NHS in Scotland is not financially sustainable and its performance has continued to decline, the public spending watchdog has warned.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-45969866>

Progress on fairer Scotland stagnates

Progress on making Scotland a fairer and more equal society has stagnated, according to a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-45952145>

Wikipedia edit-a-thon celebrates women from Isle of Skye

Thirteen new articles about women from the Isle of Skye have been added to Wikipedia to mark 100 years of women's suffrage.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-45966330>

Scottish heroines unveiled at National Wallace Monument

Maggie Keswick Jencks and Mary Slessor will be the first women commemorated in the Hall of Heroes at the monument in Stirling.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-45954162>

Inside Holyrood's forgotten committee

The Pow of Inchaffray Drainage Commission Bill Committee met for what might be the final time at Holyrood on Wednesday. Is this Scotland's most boring political assembly, or its best-kept secret?

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-44237964>

UK retains crown as global financial services exporter

Including related professional services, such as legal, accounting and business advice, the UK's combined financial and related professional services trade surplus came to about £83bn.

Read more at:

<https://www.scotsman.com/business/companies/uk-retains-crown-as-global-financial-services-exporter-1-4819387>

## Electric Canadian

Canada and its Provinces

Added Volume XIX. The Prairie Provinces Part I. which you can read at:

<https://electriccanadian.com/history/canadaprovinces.htm>

The Engineering Journal

Added the volume for 1959.at: <https://electriccanadian.com/transport/industrial/index.htm>

Mining Review

Added the volume for 1913 at: <https://electriccanadian.com/transport/mines/mining.htm>

A Brief History of Les Cheneaux Islands  
Some New Chapters of Mackinac History by Frank R. Grover (1911) (pdf)

You can read this at:  
<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/ABriefHistoryOfLesCheneauxIslands.pdf>

Making a Start in Canada  
Letters from two young emigrants with an Introduction by Alfred J. Church, M.A. (1889) (pdf)

Excellent book where we follow two brothers through their introduction to farming in Ontario and then on to British Columbia looking for land to buy and then onto Alberta where they eventually buy land and start to farm.

You can read this at: <https://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/makingastartcanada.pdf>

Travels through Canada  
By George Heriot, deputy postmaster general of British North America (1807) (pdf)

A very early book which explores Canada and part of the USA in this early period which you can read at:  
<https://www.electriccanadian.com/history/travels-through-canada.pdf>

## Electric Scotland

The Natural History of a Highland Parish  
Ardclach, Nairnshire, by Robert Thomson (1900) (pdf)

You can read this book at: [https://electricScotland.com/nature/TheNaturalHistoryofaHighlandParish\\_10256499.pdf](https://electricScotland.com/nature/TheNaturalHistoryofaHighlandParish_10256499.pdf)

Ecclesiological Notes on some of the Islands of Scotland  
By T.S. Muir (1885) (pdf)

You can read this book at: <https://www.electricScotland.com/books/pdf/Ecclesiologicalnotes.pdf>

Ardmore Whisky by Stan Bruce  
Poem part 1 of the 4 parts below was written (In Doric) for a competition in a well-known Scottish magazine, and I won. However, two weeks had passed and my bottle of whisky (The prize) hadn't been delivered, so I wrote a second poem raising my concern. After another week had passed I wrote a third poem, again raising concern about the missing bottle. Finally, the bottle arrived, and I wrote the fourth poem, I hope you enjoy them.

Read this at: <https://electricScotland.com/poetry/banff/story4.htm>

Return of the MacIntyres  
1976 MacIntyre Family from Bannockburn and Inverness Maryland Return to Scotland. A video of their travels to the lands of the MacIntyres. The video has been upgraded from the older version that used to be available.

You can view this at: <https://electricScotland.com/webclans/m/macinty2.html>

The Island of Tiree  
By William Reeves, D.D. (pdf)

You can read this book at: <https://electricScotland.com/books/islandoftiree.pdf>

Colonsay  
By Murdoch McNeil (1910) (pdf)

You can read this book at: <https://electricScotland.com/history/gazetteer/colonsay.pdf>

John Patrick  
Third Marquess of Bute, K.T. (1847- 1900). A Memoir by the Right Rev. Sir David Hunter Blair Bt., O.S.B. (1921) (pdf)

You can read this book at: <https://www.electricscotland.com/history/johnpatrick.pdf>

Clan Wallace Society

Got in their Summer 2018 issue which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/wallace/index.htm>

General Craufurd and his Light Division

By The Rev. Alexander H. Craufurd, M.A. (1891) (pdf)

You can read this book at: <https://www.electricscotland.com/history/scotreg/generalcraufurd.pdf>

## The Story

This is an article from the 1848 issue of Tait's Edinburgh Magazine. The main reason for featuring this article is to show how the Highland parishes of Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, and Argyle were among the very worst in looking after the poorest in their society. They spent considerably less than England or the South of Scotland and in many cases also made effectual slaves of the poor. You need to read this to understand what was going on.

### REMEDIES FOR HIGHLAND FAMINE

There are three classes of people in the Highlands, whose peculiar circumstances must be embraced in any remedial scheme intended to be applied to that distressed portion of the country. The first is the pauper class, consisting of the aged and infirm, widows with families of young children, and persons disabled by disease or by some bodily or mental defect. The second is the cottar class, or day-labourers, who have been permitted to squat upon the large farms, and for the privilege of growing a crop of potatoes, have become to a certain extent affixed to these farms, to which they must give their labour in the first instance, and fill up the remainder of their time with employment wherever they can find it. The third class are the crofters, who hold a few acres of land, either directly from the proprietor or as sub-tenants of the tacksmen, and who are also dependent upon day-labour for part of their subsistence. The whole of these classes have been vitally injured in their circumstances by the loss of the potato as an article of food. The whole of them are more or less exposed to famine; the whole of them are involved in sufferings as painful and distressing as afflict any portion of her Majesty's subjects; and to exclude them from a share of the legislative efforts so freely extended to the co-suffering classes of Ireland, would be a narrow and discreditable policy, utterly alien to every good quality of free and representative government.

We propose to glance at the condition of each of these classes, and endeavour in few words to show what the Legislature may do for their relief.

Respecting the first class there can be so little difference of opinion. Their allowances under the poor-law were insufficient to maintain them, even when the potato made living cheap to the poor; and since the disappearance of the potato, they are a great deal more insufficient than ever. It has always been allowed that the poor — those who can do nothing for themselves — should be fed, clothed, and lodged, out of the common store of the society in which they live. This is a nearly universal maxim. Christianity teaches it. The voice of reason, of benevolence, and of justice, have made it the law of nations. It is the law of England, and it is the law in many parishes of Scotland. Why should it not also be the law in the Highlands? The common objection, that the poor would eat up the entire rental, is a bugbear, which vanishes on the first appeal to figures. The annual value of real property in the four counties of Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, and Argyle, is £597,496 18s. A pound of rent in the Highlands is surely able to do as much for the poor as in the Lowlands, or in England. Yet the whole sum expended annually in these four Highland counties on the relief of the poor, including expenses of management and litigation, amounts only to £12,534 7s. 8½d. Let this result be compared with the amount expended on the poor in any Lowland district of equal rental, and it will be seen at once to what an incredible extent Highland property evades its obligations to the poor. An assessment of 2s. 6d. or 3s. per pound is no unusual burden in English parishes, and until it rises above 2s. it is seldom a subject of either astonishment or complaint: in these Highland counties, on the other hand, the burden of the poor is only an insignificant fraction more than 5d. per pound. The number of paupers in the four Highland counties, including those receiving merely occasional relief, is 8,751. This may be considered a pretty accurate measure of the utmost limits of pauperism, for it is seldom that any person entitled to relief does not find admittance at least to the occasional list. The pittance usually bestowed are too insignificant to encourage absolute denials of aid, and a small occasional relief is the pretence by which the poor's boards expect to fence off the poor from the more solid advantages of the permanent roll. Supposing, therefore, that the right of the whole 8,751 individuals to relief was fully admitted, the existing allowances to the poor in these four counties might still be doubled, trebled, and even quadrupled, without raising the assessment upon real property above the limits which are reckoned easy and moderate in other parts of the country. What becomes of the alleged inability of Highland property to relieve the poor? It falls entirely to the ground before these facts; and no such groundless excuse can be accepted for the non-administration of a law which has been found necessary to prevent famine in every part of the three kingdoms, as well as in the Highlands.

What, then, are the obstacles which defeat the administration of the poor-law in the Highlands? Let this question be clearly opened up, and the course to be taken by the Legislature will become plain and evident. Consider how the poor are situated. In the first

instance, they can only get relief with the consent of a poor's board, which has a direct pecuniary interest in withholding it, or in cutting it down to the most inadequate limits. This is the first difficulty in the pauper's course; and in contending with this one, other difficulties multiply on every side. He is naturally weak, while his antagonists are naturally strong. He may be equally ignorant of the precise rights which the law allows him, and of the proper steps to be taken to enforce these rights. And even if fully instructed on these points, what means has he of prosecuting his interests? If in the Highlands he may be living fifty or a hundred miles from any seat of law, in solitary and unpeopled districts, where even public opinion has no existence and no power. He may not be able so much as to write a letter, or even to speak an intelligible language; and yet the system of terrorism established in the Highlands is so complete, that he may not have a single friend or neighbour who dare discharge these simple duties for him. It is impossible to conceive a more helpless position than that of Highland paupers. At once dumb and blind, they can neither give utterance to their wrongs, nor perceive an avenue of redressing them. Their opponents, on the contrary, have every advantage — wealth, power, information, official prestige — every resource and appliance calculated either to mystify, cajole, or frighten them. Such are the enormous disadvantages which must beset the Highland pauper under the most favourable circumstances. But these were not considered enough; and the Legislature, fearful, forsooth, lest he might have too much power and get too much his own way, proceeded to strew his path with all manner of legal circuits and restrictions. As the first great step, the courts of justice were closed against the poor. No pauper is permitted, under the Act of 1845, to appeal to the Court of Session when denied relief, or in anywise unjustly treated by the parochial boards. Even the Sheriffs of counties are debarred from giving the poor man justice, when he is deprived of adequate relief. No appeal, in short, is allowed the pauper except to the Board of Supervision, which sits in secret, hears only one side of a case, refuses to take evidence or listen to pleadings, allows no expenses, and gives no reasons for its decisions. What possible chance of justice can remain to the pauper under such a system? Naturally weak, the Act of 1845 laid him utterly prostrate at the feet of the parochial boards; and the poor-law is consequently unadministered. The Legislature truckled to the Highland lairds when it consented to this bitter mockery of justice; and the crime must now be fully expiated. Parliament must retrace its steps. The constitutional control of the Court of Session as supreme court of review must be restored; the Sheriffs, who have all the means of information peculiar to local judges, must be empowered to entertain and decide questions of amount of relief; and the Board of Supervision must be compelled to alter its Star Chamber form of procedure, and give a fair and open hearing to the complaining pauper. Instead of obstructing, legislative ingenuity must be exerted to facilitate the obtainment of relief. Till these changes take place, the Highland lairds will have absolute mastery, and Highland property continue to evade its fundamental obligations. But let the poor have direct and easy access to courts of justice, give them every facility of making their wants known, and of having their claims impartially investigated and determined by disinterested and unprejudiced tribunals, and the tide will turn, the poor-law will be gradually enforced, and a sure and effective remedy provided in every Highland parish for the famine which threatens and afflicts the pauper class of the population.

The second or cottar class forms a subject of much greater difficulty. The condition of the Highland cottars must not be confounded with that of the rural labourers who bear the same name in the Lowlands. The Lowland cottar, like his Highland namesake, is allowed a cottage, a piece of garden ground, and a planting of potatoes; but in other respects his situation is totally different. In addition to these perquisites, he receives constant employment on his master's farm at weekly or half-yearly wages. His daily labour is indispensable to his employer, by whom he is consequently valued, paid, maintained. He may be poor and humble, but he is independent. He cannot be wanted, and therefore he must be fed. Let potatoes or aught else fail, the Lowland cottar must no more be famished than "the ox that treadeth out the corn." But so different is the value put upon the Highland cottars, that if a famine, a pestilence, or a flood would come and sweep them all away, there would be few to mourn their loss, and many, to a certainty, who would think that pastoral concerns would move on all the better of the clearance. The Highland cottars only live by sufferance on the outskirts of the large sheep farms. They are barely tolerated. Barren spots have been chosen out, and on these, more in contempt than even in pity, they have been allowed to squat, to raise a hovel, and plant potatoes. In return for these petty privileges, the tacksman holds a mortgage over their personal services. They must be always ready at his call, to carry seaware from the shore, or common manure from the dung-heap, to sow his seed, to make his hay, to cut his peats, to reap his corn, and in short to do every drudgery about the farm. If he is a kind-hearted master he gives them a day's food for every day they work, but if he is a hard, illiberal man, the hovel and the potato-patch pay for all. The labour of the cottar is openly decried as a drug, a nuisance, a thing which the tacksman would as soon want as have, and the cottar himself suffers degradation accordingly. - Serf, helot, slave—every epithet which has been used to designate the multifarious forms of human bondage, fail fully to express the reproach and wretchedness centred in the Highland cottar. There is something in his lot which, exceeds the limits of all past or contemporaneous bondage. He is a slave, and yet no man will condescend to be his master. If prosperity shines upon him, the tacksman can interrupt it and exact his labour; but if adversity settles down upon his path, the tacksman can repudiate his connexion, and leave him to his fate: so that he has neither the liberty of a freeman nor the certain maintenance of a slave. The value of labour has been utterly confounded in his eyes. He has never known what a day's work is really and truly worth. One day he gives his labour to the tacksman, which goes to pay some indefinite fraction of certain unvalued and insignificant privileges; and the next he runs an errand or hauls a net, for which his remuneration may be as disproportioned as in the former case it was unappreciable. Dangled between these two extremes, he loses sight of the true use and dignity of labour, and contracts a hatred of patient toil, a love of idleness, and a miserable dependence upon chance, which nothing but long years of training can eradicate. Such is the singular and deplorable position of a large class of the Highland population, whom the failure of the potato has brought to the very verge of famine. Every one will perceive what requires to be done for their amelioration. Their labour must, in the first place, be emancipated; and, in the second place, it must be fully and constantly employed. The tethers which bind the cottars to the car of the sheep farmers must be totally destroyed. The labour of the one and the privileges granted by the other must be permitted to find their proper value. If the one has a day's work to sell, let it be paid in money; and if the other has a cottage or a piece of land to let, let a

fair rent be put upon it. And along with this definition and disentanglement of interests, let there be an opening up of employment to give full scope and to secure fair remuneration to the liberated energies of the cottars. These measures lie at the foundation of all improvement of the condition of this class of the population; but the means by which the Legislature may bring about such desirable results, is a point which we postpone till the reader glance with us for a moment at the position and circumstances of the crofters.

The crofters, though not much less exposed to hardship and want than the cottars, occupy a much higher position in the social scale. They are holders of land; and though tenants-at-will, they pay rents, and consequently are included in the circle of the landlord's sympathy and protection. Being their own masters, they are able to dispose of their surplus labour more advantageously than the cottars. They are also better versed in the art of managing the soil. Their experience has not been confined to the cultivation of potatoes, but extends to a rotation of crops and a proper system of manuring. They are owners of two or three cows each, and in some instances, a few sheep. They may also have a horse; perhaps a plough and some other implements of husbandry. In short, by position, by experience, and by means, the crofters are eminently adapted for becoming a substantial small-farming class; while to the cottars must be assigned the more humble position of day-labourers. In the meantime, however, the crofter is entirely precluded from rising, and without immediate measures for his relief, his course must be one of rapid deterioration. His piece of land was in the most of cases too small, even under potatoes, to afford a competent subsistence to his family. The loss of that root has made the deficiency double or treble what it was formerly, and his dependence upon day-labour is proportionately increased. The opening up of employment, therefore, is equally necessary to avert famine from the door of the crofter as of the cottar. But there is the difference between the two, that while constant employment at day-labour would be a positive advance upon the cottar's present condition, it would in the case of the crofter be a positive retrogression; and consequently no measure of amelioration can be complete which, besides increasing employment, does not aim at extending and strengthening the crofter's position as a holder and cultivator of land.

In considering by what means the Legislature I may save the Highland cottars and crofters from impending famine, it is of the utmost importance to I feel that this is a problem of very solemn and unusual urgency. If people come to this subject with the expectation of proposing, or hearing proposed, remedies of the usual Parliamentary cut, we may despair of ever seeing the extraordinary exigencies of the present crisis successfully grappled with. The usual food of the population, to which their habits and their industry have been accommodated for more than half a century, has suddenly disappeared. The loss can only be repaired by revolutionising the system of society anew. Enthralled and idle cottars have to be converted into free and independent labourers, and supplied with constant and remunerative employment; while crofters, starving upon two, three, or four acres of land, have to be placed on small farms of double and treble size. Such are the formidable social changes, essentially necessary to place the population in a position of even ordinary safety. It is so far promising, and may be regarded as indicative of the thorough manageableness of the crisis, that these changes naturally lie within the sphere of the land-owners, and might easily be introduced by them without the extraneous aid of new acts of Parliament. Nothing short, indeed, of the plastic hand of proprietorship can permanently mould the social system of the Highlands into the new form prescribed to famine and necessity; and there cannot be a doubt, that if the Highland lairds were to apply themselves to the task, they might speedily by their own private measures accomplish all that is required. The sheep-walks, if broken up into moderate farms, would give ample employment to the cottars; while the waste lands in every parish afford the means of enlarging the small farms of the crofters. The intention of the Duke of Sutherland to adopt measures of this kind on the expiry of his present leases, is a strong proof both of their advisability, and of the change which is beginning to take place in the views of the Highland proprietors. But hunger cannot and will not wait upon the expiry of leases, or the slow progress of conversions. An immediate remedy is required, and hence the necessity of Parliamentary interference. Let a bill be passed, giving every starving man a right to employment from his parish; and authorising a board of works to appropriate the waste lands at a valuation, to set the people to work in reclaiming them, and, in short, to carry out the improvements as nearly as possible as if they had been undertaken by the proprietors. Such a law would still leave the proprietors the alternative of working out the necessary changes themselves. It would only operate in parishes where the proprietors display a culpable indifference to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, and the responsibilities of their position. It would stimulate improvements; it would hasten the introduction of the new system which is dawning on the Highlands; while at the same time it would avert the pangs of hunger from the able-bodied population, and carry them in safety over the dangers of a trying and calamitous period of transition. Such is our legislative prescription for the destitution of the Highland cottars and crofters. We content ourselves with merely throwing out our idea, rough and unpolished, without entering on details. Every man will have his own opinion of the minor features of a parliamentary bill, but we express our conviction that without such a measure in its main elements as we have suggested, it will be impossible for the Legislature to stand with a clear conscience before the suffering population of the Highlands.

And that's it for this week and hope you have a great weekend.

Alastair