

# Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at [rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk). This is Litir 469. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 165 corresponds to Litir 469.*

Tha sinne ann an Alba a’ gabhail misneachd gu bheil a-nise Ministear airson na Gàidhlig ann an Riaghaltas Alba Nuaidh. Is esan Aonghas MacÌosaig. Chan eil roinn mhòr aige ag obair as leth a’ chànain, ach tha e brosnachail dhuinn uile gu bheil àite aig a’ Ghàidhlig ann am poilitigs na mòr-roinne, anns an robh na ficheadan mhiltean de luchd-labhairt a’ chànain uaireigin.

Dh’fhaodar a ràdh, ’s dòcha – gu h-eachdraidheil – gun robh àite na bu mhotha aig Gàidheil ann am poilitigs Chanada na bha ann am poilitigs na h-Alba. ’S iomadh duine aig an robh Gàidhlig a bha an sàs ann am poilitigs Chanada anns an naoidheamh linn deug.

A dh’aindeoin sin, ge-tà, cha chreid mi gun d’ fhuair an cànan riamh inbhe oifigeil. Is beag an t-iongnadh, ’s dòcha, nuair a thathar a’ coimhead air mar a chaidh dèiligeadh rithe ann an Alba fhèin. Ach rinneadh oidhirp aon turas **ri a dèanamh na cànan oifigeil** ann an Canada.

Bha sin ann an ochd ceud deug is naochad (1890). B’ e am fear a chuir am bile air adhart ann an Seanadh na dùthcha Tòmas MacAonghais. Rugadh MacAonghais ann an Alba Nuadh, ach bha e an sàs ann an poilitigs Cholumbia Bhreatannaich. Bhuineadh e do shliochd nan Gàidheal. Chuir e air adhart bile air an robh “*Act to provide for the use of Gaelic in Official proceedings*”.

Nuair a bha e a’ bruidhinn mun bhile, thuirt MacAonghais gun robh ceithir cheud mìle a bharrachd de shliochd nan Gàidheal ann an Canada na bh’ ann de shliochd nam Frangach. Bha na Gàidheil anns a’ phrìomh àite a thaobh àireamh sluaigh. Ciamar a fhuair e sin? Uill, bha e a’ cunntadh nan Albannach is nan Èireannach còmhla.

Bha sluagh nan Èireannach is nan Albannach còmhla a’ tighinn gu cha mhòr millean is seachd ceud mìle (1,700,000). Anns an dàrna àite bha na Frangaich le cha mhòr millean is trì cheud mìle (1,300,000). Cha robh ann de Shasannaich ach cha mhòr naoi ceud mìle (900,000) agus bha na Gearmailtich anns a’ cheathramh àite le dà cheud gu leth mìle (250,000). Ciamar fon ghrèin, ma-thà, a fhuair na Sasannaich làmh-an-uachdair ann an Canada? Uill, ’s e ceist mhòr a tha sin, agus fàgaidh mi i do latha eile!

Goirid mus do nochd bile na Gàidhlig ann am Pàrlamaid Chanada, bha bile eile ann leis an amas cur às do chòraichean luchd-labhairt na Fraingis. Bhruidhinn am Prìomhaire, Sir Iain A Dòmhnallach, an aghaidh sin, agus e a’ toirt a thaic do na Frangaich. Bha cuid de na Gàidheil na bu bhuailtiche an taic a thoirt don Fhraingis na bha iad don cànan fhèin.

Tha sin air a dhearbhadh leis na figearan airson na thug taic don bhile anns an t-Seanadh – dìreach seachdnar. Bha ceathrad ’s a dhà na aghaidh. Bha sin a dh’aindeoin tomhas

MhicAonghais gun robh deichnear anns an t-Seanadh aig an robh Gàidhlig na h-Alba is ochdnar aig an robh Gàidhlig na h-Èireann (agus trithead 's a dhà buill ann an Taigh nan Cumantan ann an Ottawa aig an robh Gàidhlig de sheòrsa air choreigin).

'S dòcha gun robh am bile aige dìreach ro anmoch. Bha Gàidhlig mu thràth air an rathad sìos ann an Canada mar a bha i ann an Alba. Tha i air a dhol sìos anns an dà dhùthaich ach chan eil i marbh ann an tè seach tè dhiubh. Agus a-nise tha àite oifigeil aice ann am poilitigs nach robh aice riamh roimhe. **Far an laigh na fir, 's ann a dh'èireas iad.**

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**Faclan na Litreach:** Aonghas MacÌosaig: *Angus MacIsaac*; roinn: *department*; Seanadh: *Senate*; Tòmas MacAonghais: *Thomas MacInnes*; cha mhòr: *nearly*; seachdnar: *seven people*; deichnear: *ten people*.

**Abairtean na Litreach:** tha sinn a' gabhail misneachd: *we are encouraged*; Riaghaltas Alba Nuaidh: *the Government of Nova Scotia*; ag obair as leth a' chànain: *working on behalf of the language*; poilitigs na mòr-roinne: *the politics of the province*; anns an robh X uaireigin: *in which there was/were X at one time*; dh'fhaodar a ràdh: *it might be said*; cha chreid mi gun d' fhuair an cànan riamh inbhe oifigeil: *I don't think the language ever achieved official status*; nuair a thathar a' coimhead air mar a chaidh dèiligeadh rithe ann an Alba: *when its treatment [how it was treated] in Scotland is considered [looked at]*; rinneadh oidhirp aon turas: *an effort was made on one occasion*; b' e am fear a chuir am bile air adhart: *the man who proposed the bill was*; poilitigs Cholumbia Bhreatannaich: *British Columbian politics*; bhuineadh e do shliochd nan Gàidheal: *he belonged to the descendants of Gaels*; na bh' ann de shliochd nam Frangach: *than there were of descendants of the French*; a thaobh àireamh sluaigh: *in terms of population numbers*; ciamar a fhuair na Sasannaich làmh-an-uachdair?: *how did the English achieve dominance?*; leis an amas cur às do chòraichean luchd-labhairt na Fraingis: *with the aim of eliminating the [linguistic] rights of the Francophone community*; na bu bhualtiche an taic a thoirt don Fhraingis na bha iad don cànan fhèin: *more inclined to assist the French language than they were to assist their own language*; airson na thug taic don bhile: *for those who gave their support to the bill*; trithead 's a dhà buill ann an Taigh nan Cumantan: *32 members in the House of Commons*; de sheòrsa air choreigin: *of one sort or another*; chan eil i marbh ann an tè seach tè dhiubh: *she is not dead in either of them*.

**Puing-chànain na Litreach: ri a dhèanamh na cànan oifigeil:** *to make her an official language [lit. "to make her in her official language"]*. Remember that languages, including Gaelic, are conceptually and grammatically feminine. This is reflected in the above phrase. If it had been masculine, I would have said *ri a dhèanamh na chànain oifigeil [lit. "to make him in his official language"]*. The lenition is because of the effect of the masculine third person singular possessive eg a bhràthair (*his brother*) cf a bràthair (*her brother*). "To make them official languages" would be *rin dèanamh nan cànanan oifigeil [lit. "to make them in their official languages"]*.

**Seanfhacal na Litreach: Far an laigh na fir, 's ann a dh'èireas iad:** *where men lie down they will get up (ie do not get discouraged about what has happened to our language – we can arise once more!)*

\* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig