

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. This is Litir 484. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 180 corresponds to Litir 484.

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh an t-seachdain sa chaidh mun fhear-phoilitigs ainmeil Sir Iain MacCoinnich. Rugadh is thogadh e ann an taobh sear Rois ach ghluais e gu ruige New Zealand, no Sealan Nuadh, cuide ri bhean ann an ochd ceud deug is seasgad. Chaidh iad gu tìr ann am Port Chalmers, faisg air Dùn Èideann anns an Eilean mu Dheas. Bha tòrr dhaoine à Alba a’ fuireach anns an sgìre sin.

Leis gun do thogadh Iain mar ghille tuathanaich air a’ Ghàidhealtachd, bha e comasach air cìobaireachd is obair fearainn. Fhuair e obair sa bhad mar chìobair gu tuath air Dùn Èideann. Dh’obraich e gu cruaidh. Bhiodh a bhean ag ràdh **gur gann gum fac’ i e** nuair a bha solas an latha ann. Ach, taobh a-staigh dà bhliadhna, bha airgead gu leòr aca airson tuathanas a cheannach. Thug Iain “Ardross” mar ainm air an tuathanas – às dèidh an àite anns an do thogadh e ann an Alba.

Chaidh Iain an sàs ann am poilitigs aig ìre ionadail agus ann an ochd ceud deug, ochdad ’s a h-aon (1881) chaidh a thaghadh mar bhall pàrlamaid. Bha e gu bhith air falbh tòrr dhen ùine ann am Wellington, prìomh bhaile na dùthcha.

Bha e na bhall de na Libearalaich a bha làidir anns an Eilean mu Dheas, gu h-àraidh ann an sgìrean dùthchail. Chuir e roimhe a bhith a’ dìon nan tuathanach beaga, agus a bhith ag adhartachadh còraichean nan daoine beaga fearann a bhith aca. Chunnaic e an sgrìobair a rinn uachdranachd fearainn ann an Alba. Nuair a bha e còig bliadhna a dh’aois, chunnaic e muinntir Ghleann Chailbhaidh às dèidh gun deach am fuadachadh bhon dachannan.

Cha robh e idir **airson ’s gun** tachradh an aon rud ann an Sealan Nuadh. Agus fhuair e an cothrom a phoileasaidhean a chur an sàs aig ìre nàiseanta. Bha e na Mhinistear airson an Fhearainn agus an Àiteachais anns an Riaghaltas Libearalach eadar ochd ceud deug, naochad ’s a h-aon (1891) agus a’ bhliadhna naoi ceud deug (1900).

Rinn e ceithir rudan a dh’atharraich sealbh an fhearainn ann an Sealan Nuadh. Thug e a-steach cìs fearainn. Stèidhich e cothrom do dhaoine fearann a bhith aca air mhàl gu sìorraidh – rud ris an canar an “999-year lease” ann am Beurla. Cheannaich an Riaghaltas oighreachd mhòr, agus bhris iad an oighreachd airson tuathanasan beaga a chruthachadh. Agus stèidhich e ann an lagh cead a bhith aig an riaghaltas fearann a cheannach an aghaidh toil an duine leis an robh e. Agus còrr is ceud bliadhna mus deach còraichean muinntir na h-Alba coiseachd far an togradh iad air beanntan na dùthcha seo a stèidheachadh ann an lagh, bha Iain MacCoinnich airson ’s gum biodh còraichean mar sin aig muinntir Shealain Nuaidh.

Mus robh MacCoinnich na Mhinistear airson an Fhearainn, bha uachdranachd fearainn a' fàs. Bha Sealan Nuadh a' gluasad a dh'ionnsaigh modal rudeigin Albannach, anns am biodh mòran fearainn ann an làmhan beag-chuid de dhaoine beartach. Bha cuid de dh'oighreachdan fearainn, gu h-àraidh anns an Eilean mu Dheas, a' fàs mòr mòr. Ach, anns an deichead san robh MacCoinnich na Mhinistear, chaidh 1.3 millean acaire fhosgladh airson tuathanasan beaga a chruthachadh. Fhuair seachd mìle teaghlach buannachd dhìreach às.

Ach bha aon bhuidheann nach robh toilichte oir bha fearann mòr aca – gu h-àraidh anns an Eilean mu Thuath. Na Maori. Chì sinn mar a thug poileasaidhean MhicCoinnich buaidh orrasan anns an ath Litir.

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Faclan na Litreach: fear-poilitigs: *politician*; Sir Iain MacCoinnich: *Sir John McKenzie*; Sealan Nuadh: *New Zealand*; Dùn Èideann: *Dunedin*; Eilean mu Dheas: *South Island*, Gleann Cailbhaidh: *Glencalvie*; cìs: *tax*; Eilean mu Thuath: *North Island*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cuide ri bhean: *with his wife*; comasach air cìobaireachd is obair fearainn: *capable of shepherding and agricultural work*; às dèidh an àite anns an do thogadh e: *after the place in which he was raised*; chaidh a thaghadh mar bhall pàrlamaid: *he was elected as a member of parliament*; a' dìon nan tuathanach beaga: *defending the small farmers*; ag adhartachadh còraichean nan daoine beaga fearann a bhith aca: *promoting the rights of small [ordinary] people to own land*; an sgrios a rinn uachdranachd fearainn: *the damage landlordism did*; gun deach am fuadachadh bhon dachannan: *they were evicted from their homes*; a phoileasaidhean a chur an sàs: *to implement his policies*; Ministear airson an Fhearainn agus an Àiteachais: *Minister for Lands and Agriculture*; fearann a bhith aca air mhàl gu sìorraidh: *to rent land forever*; an aghaidh toil an duine leis an robh e: *compulsorily, against the wishes of the person who owned it*; coiseachd far an togradh iad: *to walk where they wished*; ann an làmhan beag-chuid de dhaoine beartach: *in the hands of a minority of rich people*; chaidh 1.3 millean acaire fhosgladh airson tuathanasan beaga a chruthachadh: *1.3 million acres were opened in order to create small farms*; fhuair seachd mìle teaghlach buannachd dhìreach às: *seven thousand families derived a direct benefit from it*; chì sinn mar a thug poileasaidhean MhicCoinnich buaidh orrasan: *we'll see how McKenzie's policies affected them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Cha robh e idir **airson 's gun** tachradh an aon rud ann an Sealan Nuadh: *he didn't at all want the same thing to happen in New Zealand. This is an extension of the idiomatic use of airson meaning "wanting" as in "a bheil thu airson a dhol ann?" (do you want to go?) or "a bheil thu airson pinnt?" (do you want a pint?). Here's a couple more examples of the form in the Litir in which airson is followed by agus (abbreviated to 's) and a relative verbal form: tha mi airson 's gum fan i tostach (I want her to remain silent); a bheil thu airson 's gun tig an cù? (do you want the dog to come?)*

Gnathas-cainnt na Litreach: Bhiodh a bhean ag ràdh **gur gann gum faca i e** nuair a bha solas an latha ann: *his wife would say that she hardly saw him during daylight hours [when there was daylight].*

* Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA