

An Litir Bheag **le Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 1,020 (which corresponds to Litir 1,324). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

I was telling you about Peter Fraser from Easter Ross. He was for a long time the Prime Minister in New Zealand. His family was poor, as were most of the folk in Hill of Fearn. Peter left school at the age of fourteen. He worked, to begin with, as a postie. Then he got an apprenticeship as a carpenter.

He was surrounded by politics. The men of the village would meet in his father's workshop to debate politics. The workshop had a local nickname – The House of Commons!

Peter was a Liberal. However, gradually he moved to the left, towards the Labour Party. When his apprenticeship was over, he worked in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Then he got work in London.

He was involved in the development of the House of Commons – the real one! That added to his interest in politics. He would listen to speakers in Hyde Park. And he would support the suffragettes. They were struggling for voting rights for women.

He heard about New Zealand. That country had already given the vote[s] to women. And the class

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu Phàdraig Friseal à Taobh Sear Rois. Bha e airson ùine mhòr na Phrìomhaire ann an Sealann Nuadh. Bha an teaghlach aige bochd, mar a bha a' chuid mhòr ann am Baile an Droma. Dh'fhàg Pàdraig an sgoil aig aois ceithir-deug. Dh'obraich e an toiseach mar phost. An uair sin fhuair e preantasachd mar shaor.

Bha e air a chuartachadh le poilitigs. Bhiodh fir a' bhaile a' tighinn cruinn còmhla ann an ceàrdach athar airson poilitigs a dheasbad. Bha far-ainm air a' cheàrdaich gu h-ionadail – Taigh nan Cumantan!

Bha Pàdraig na Libearalach. Ge-tà, mean air mhean, ghluais e don làimh chli, don Phàrtaidh Làbarach. Nuair a bha a phreantasachd seachad, dh'obraich e ann an Dùn Èideann agus Glaschu. An uair sin fhuair e obair ann an Lunnainn.

Bha e an sàs ann an leasachadh Thaigh nan Cumantan – am fear ceart! Chuir sin ris an ùidh a bha aige ann am poilitigs. Bhiodh e ag èisteachd ri òraidichean ann an Hyde Park. Agus bhiodh e a' toirt taic do na suffragettes. Bha iadsan a' strì airson còraichean bhòtaidh do bhoireannaich.

Chuala e mu Shealann Nuadh. Bha an dùthaich air bhòtaichean a thoirt do bhoireannaich mu-thràth. Agus cha robh an

system wasn't as bad as it was in Britain. Those [things] were attractive to him. Peter sailed in 1910.

For a while, he was working as a labourer. When he got the opportunity, he would go to the library to read books.

Although New Zealand was advanced in many ways there was still injustice there. Peter was now confident enough to stand in front of a crowd, making speeches.

He was arrested by the police twice. The first time, he was speaking about defending workers' rights. The second time, he was speaking against military conscription in the Great War. He spent a year in prison for that. Peter was opposed to the First [World] War. He reckoned it was just a conflict between the leaders of imperial powers.

siostam clas an sin cho dona 's a bha e ann am Breatainn. Bha iad sin ga tharraing. Sheòl Pàdraig ann an naoi ceud deug 's a deich (1910).

Airson greis, bha e ag obair mar shaothraiche. Nuair a bha an cothrom aige, bhiodh e a' falbh don leabharlann, a' leughadh leabhraichean.

Ged a bha Sealann Nuadh adhartach ann an iomadh dòigh, bha fhathast ana-ceartas ann. Bha Pàdraig a-nise misneachail gu leòr gus seasamh air beulaibh sluagh, a' gabhail òraidean.

Bha e air a chur an grèim leis na poilis dà thuras. A' chiad triop, bha e a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn dìon còraichean luchd-obrach. An dàrna turas, bha e a' bruidhinn an aghaidh dleastanas-airm anns a' Chogadh Mhòr. Chuir e seachad bliadhna sa phrìosan airson sin. Bha Pàdraig an aghaidh a' Chiad Chogaidh. Bha e dhen bheachd nach robh ann ach còmhrag eadar ceannardan dùthchannan ìmpireil.