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‘The Crofters War on the Sutherland Estate’
by
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Thank you very much for this invitation, not least because despite having studied Sutherland for eight years now, this is the first paper I've ever given on Sutherland soil. So, thank you very much. Secondly, if during my paper anything comes to your mind, any corrections, any additional information, particularly papers or pictures, photographs, if you have any knowledge like that, I'll be very grateful to hear it. So if anything comes to mind that you think could add to my work, please, please do tell me.

Now, as was kindly mentioned in the introduction, my work has been on Highland Estates, roughly from the post-clearance era, so say 1830s, to about the 1930s, with particular reference to the Sutherland Estates. The Sutherland Estate papers are in the National Library of Scotland, and I've spent, as I have said, the last eight years working on those. What I'm going to talk about tonight is a slightly new angle to the topic, and some new work I've been doing, which is looking at the estate management in Sutherland.

The family, the Countess and her son, Lord Strathnaver, have kept the personal papers of the family at Dunrobin Castle. So, I can't tell you too much about the Ducal family itself, but I can tell you about how the estate was run and managed on the ground. So that's what I want to talk to you about tonight. Starting, in 1883.

In 1883 a Royal Commission, the Napier Commission, named after its chairman, Lord Napier, was established by the Government at the time, to travel around the whole of the Highland region to investigate the grievances of the crofters and the cotters there. This work had been prompted by the outbreak of violence and agitation among the crofter population of Skye, alongside growing calls for land law reform and a curb in the power of the great estates.

No estate, I would argue, was greater than that of Sutherland at this time. At over one million acres in the county of Sutherland, plus an extra 30,000 acres of land in England, it was the largest landed estate in Western Europe at the time and the Dukes of Sutherland were among the richest patrician landowners in Britain, a nation

not lacking in patrician landowners. Crofters, cotters and their representatives came forward to give evidence to the Napier Commission to discuss what they felt were the roots of their chronic poverty, even occasional destitution of the people in the Highlands. Lack of security of tenure, lack of land and high rents were all cited. But in Sutherland, other views were put forward as well, partly contemporary grievance but more importantly, I think, a historical grievance. The Sutherland crofters brought up the great Clearances of 1807 to 1821. Also, on top of that, what they called landlord oppression, or the tyranny of the estate management, the Highland Factors.

Both of aspects were, in the minds of the Sutherland crofters at least, deeply related. That is, the troubled history of the estate Clearances was seen as, if you like, feeding into contemporary estate management policy, and also the personnel as well, as though the estate Factors were the physical incarnation of the clearance policy and the landlord dominance that it symbolised. So that's what I'm going to talk about tonight, oppression, tyranny, suffering, but in particular on the Sutherland estate.

Now for much of the 19th century, the presence of the Duke of the family in Sutherland was sporadic. When I'm talking about the 1880s, we are talking about the third Duke of Sutherland. The third Duke spent perhaps two or three weeks a year at Dunrobin, that would be the maximum. He's spending much of his time in London and on the English estates as well. So, we're really looking tonight at the role and the position of the Sutherland Factors or Estate Managers and it's to them that we must turn to when examining this idea of tyranny or oppression over the crofters in Sutherland.

Interestingly what you find from the evidence given to Lord Napier is that most crofters did not blame the Duke of Sutherland for their problems. Instead, they identified the Factors as their enemies. One witness in front of Lord Napier claimed, I'm quoting here, *"the crofters impute all the wars and cruelty and repression they talk about the Duke's officials"*. The Duke, in their opinion, can do no wrong.

Another crofter put the situation more bluntly, I'm quoting again, *"the Duke of Sutherland is a good proprietor, but his officials are tyrannical"*. There were some exceptions to this ideal of good feeling between the tenant and the proprietor. Some did point out that as the landowner it was the Duke who was ultimately responsible for the well-being of his tenantry and of his officials. He said it is the duke, the duke, the Duke. There is no room for enterprise or any independent spirit.

Complaints were also made about the Duke's absenteeism. One clerical witness said all that we are allowed is to gaze with admiration on the retreating wheels of his carriage when he is going away. These were the exceptions to the rule, however, most crofters, at least up until the early 1880s, were loyal to the duke of family, even after the Clearances. There's a strong sense of loyalty to the family. They were also, I would argue, completely attached to the basic principles of landlordism, that is, they were not opposed to the idea of a Duke of Sutherland per se, but they just wanted better treatment from the Duke. So, what I want to look at tonight is what factorial tyranny or oppression actually consisted of, if the accusations were true as well, and why it became such a political and social hot potato in the 1880s during the Crofters War.

What becomes immediately evident if you read the evidence given to the Napier Commission is the huge historical storage of grievances against the Sutherland estate management, with complaints large and small made against named individuals, and almost always the Sutherland Factors were the persons accused, not the ground officers and not the Duke. This takes me to the last area I want to look at, which is how did the estate management deal with this vilification?

It's clear that as part of their jobs, Factors were never going to be popular figures in Highland society, and they didn't expect to be popular either. Some thought that if they were popular, it would mean that they were not doing their jobs properly. It must have taken its toll both professionally and personally, and I want to explore that tonight as well. But before I go on to these issues, I want to say a word first about the actual nuts and bolts of the Sutherland estate, and I hope I'm not telling you what you know already. If I do, just tell me to shut up.

So this is the structure of the estate, who-was-who if you like, because these names will come back throughout the paper. Due to the vast size of the Sutherland estate, it was divided into three managements as they were called. The first management on the east coast is Dunrobin, with its six parishes roughly 300,000 acres, and the largest share of the population of the county. The Dunrobin Factor was based near Galsby at Reeves Farm. They farmed that and had £600 a year salary, which is quite substantial. The Dunrobin Factor was seen as the most prestigious post, as it covered the largest, richest section of the estate, and of course would come into most contact with the family when they were in situ in Dunrobin Castle. The Dunrobin Factor in the period I'll

be talking about tonight was Joseph Peacock. He was English, had a very good head for numbers, and it was always the policy of the Sutherland estate management to appoint what they called 'outsiders' to management posts, with Joseph Peacock no exception. He was a very able Factor, good at dealing with both the crofting tenants, the large sheep farmers and the shooting tenants in his management.

The second area, the very north, was the Tongue management. That covers all the way down to Strathnaver and all the way across to Cape Wrath. The Tongue management, of course, being much more sparsely populated, the Factor there was based at Tongue House and was salaried at £400 per year, plus a sheep farm. The lower salary reflected his smaller responsibilities. The individual who was the Tongue Factor in our period was John Crawford, again an Englishman.

Last but not least, we come to the Scourie management, which, covered Assynt, Eddrachillis. The Factor there was based at Scourie Lodge, and was one Evander McIver, who we'll be coming back to again. Here's a picture of McIver, and he did write a memoir of his life from which I've taken this photograph.

So, this is Evander McIver, taken when he was 81 years of age, and still in post, a lesson to us all. Evander McIver was appointed into the Scourie management in 1845, and he didn't retire until 1895. A 50-year tenure, covering the Highland Famine, post-famine emigration, right up through the Crofters' War, and beyond, a very important figure, certainly in my studies. The Scourie management that McIver ran, was the most heavily populated by crofters and cotters, the most poverty stricken, congested, with the most social problems. Thus, it was here, in the Scourie management, that we see the greatest levels of agitation in the 1880s, and right through into the early 20th century as well.

If I just flick back, we have the three managements, each with their own Factor and they would be helped by a Ground Officer, one per parish. The Ground Officers ran the day-to-day business.

The other level of management was a kind of upper estate management, the head of the estate, the Duke of Sutherland. At this period, from 1861 to 1892, it's the third Duke, and I do have a picture of him. He's the big bearded gentleman at the top, in military uniform. As have said the third Duke of Sutherland was rarely on the ground in the 1880s. He had a mistress and he spent a lot of time on a steam yacht in the Caribbean with her, and not much time in Sutherland. Because he was never around and rarely in Britain, a Commissioner was appointed, a level above the Factors, but below the Duke. The Commissioner had an interesting role, a lot more than a land manager, a Factor. In fact, he ran all the Duke's estates, of which there are many, all of his industrial investments, his business portfolios, and all other aspects of the Ducal Empire. James Locke, of the Clearances fame, was the first Commissioner but the Commissioner in our period was General Sir Arnold Burroughs Kimball. He had a fascinating career, which I need to do more work on, but in summary he was a career army officer, born in India, saw service in Afghanistan, and what is now Iraq and Turkey, before taking up the Commissionership of the Sutherland Estate, at this time the most prestigious land management post in Britain. Another outsider to the Highlands then, and to Sutherland and he would have his work cut out for him once the Crofter's War spread to the Sutherland Estate, and in marshalling his Factors to face the brave new world of Crofter's rights from the 1880s.

So, that's the management. Now, if we can take it back to the idea of tyranny and landlord oppression, my big theme for this evening, whatever the root cause, moral or historical, it's clear that the Sutherland crofters and cotters regarded the estate management, the Factors and the Commissioner, as their inveterate enemies. One witness in front of the Napier commission described the Factors in this way, quote "*the agents of his grace are his hands, his eyes, his ears and his feet. And in their dealings with people, they are constantly like a wall of ice between his grace and his grace's people. So, they seem as a dividing line, if you like*".

There is a longstanding, widespread, almost fundamental belief among the crofters that if only they could communicate directly to the Duke, all would be well. Of course, we can criticise that view. There were many alleged instances of tyranny towards the Sutherland crofters and cotters, the big one being Clearances and eviction, obviously. This is after the great Clearances ended in 1821, and the small Clearances that continue after that, followed by the extension of sheep farms and shooting lets, cutting in on crofter resources. With rack renting, all of these factors build to an overall picture of an autocratic management gone mad in the North, away from the public gaze.

Another witness to the Napier Commission focused on these moral ideas behind Factorial tyranny, and if I tell you he was a Free Church minister, that will put his comments in context. He explained the Factors' behaviour in these terms, quite a long quote I'm afraid: "*Factors find themselves placed in remote districts with enormous*

and almost absolute power over nearly every person there. And the more they exercise this power, the more the love of power increases, and impatience of all opposition increases. These men, in these circumstances, would be more than human if they did not sometimes commit excesses in the exercise of this power, and do things which it would be painful to bring to light, and which they can hardly see in their true colour unless set before the eyes of the public". It was the Tongue Minister who made these comments.

The idea being that the Factors could not recognise themselves in their behaviour has some truth. I would say, in this claim, that there's no public light being shone onto the behaviour of Factors, and in the conduct of affairs on the Sutherland estate. If anything, the Sutherland estate was an exception to this particular view. After all, the prominence of the Sutherland Clearances of the early 19th century had led to sustained public criticism of the Ducal family and estate for decades, right from the point the Clearances were committed, if committed being the right word. There was sustained public criticism all the way through, not just created in the Crofters' War, it was of long-standing duration. The Sutherland estate, more than any other Highland estate, I would argue, was resentfully aware that its actions came under more public scrutiny than any other Highland estate.

The impact this had on estate policy was vast. In all my studies of the Sutherland estate after 1850, they always have one eye on public opinion, and that will directly affect their estate policy decisions. So, for example, trying to prevent any more Clearances, giving aid during the famine of the late 1840s as well. They were always trying to protect their public reputation, and I think that's probably right to say it's continued right up to the present day. The Sutherland Factors, of course, always denied that tyranny or oppression of Crofters or Cotters happened, and they were not being deliberately disingenuous, I would argue. They sincerely believed that they were fair in all their actions of estate policy. What I find really interesting about this question, is how does that complete disengagement between the two sides occur? How can the Crofters and Cotters feel oppressed and tyrannized, and the Factors not accept that at all? The Crofters and Cotters, on the one hand, feeling that they're treated unfairly, unjustly, often cruelly and the Factors believing that they were always acting in the best interests of both their employer, the Duke, and the Crofters. If you read the Factors' correspondence, they're constantly stressing that their actions were meant to benefit the Crofting population as well.

So, on the face of it, we have a puzzling and almost complete lack of self-knowledge on the part of the Southern Crofters, and dare I say, Crofters as a whole. But it could also be about expectations. Expectations of what estate managers were there to do, and what Crofters were there to do as well. So, I want to look at this now.

In the 1880s the Crofters, Cotters and their champions wanted accountability and transparency in the actions of estate management. No more personal fiefdoms, no more lack of avenues for redress of wrongs done, but they wanted Crofters' rights regulated by an impartial outsider, that is the British Government.

Estate managements were not seen as capable of exercising an even hand and in one sense, why would they? Estates are run for the benefit of their owners and Crofters. The entire crofting system was by the 1880s seen as opposed to landowning interests and crofting was seen as a recipe for poverty, for destitution, that Crofters, Cotters were automatically a burden on the poor. On the Sutherland estates, the rental rule was dominated by the large tenants, the sheep farmers, the shooting tenants, and they paid their rents on time and were never in arrears. If you compare that to the Crofters' contributions to the estate finances, in the 1880s only about 15% of the estate rental was contributed to by the Crofters and in the 1880s, roughly half of this at any time was in arrears. So, they're not contributing financially to the estate in any important way, so why should the estate management run things in the interests of the Crofters? It wouldn't really make sense if for the Factors to do their job properly, which is to run the estate in the interests of the Duke, then they really want to sideline Crofters. Of course, this position is clear to the Factors, but it's not so clear to the Crofters.

The Crofters felt that their poverty had been created by estate policy in the first place, that the Clearances had started a cycle of poverty in which they were unable to escape. The widespread belief that it had been the Clearances that created Highland poverty became an orthodoxy by the 1880s and we start hearing rhetoric about reversing the Clearances and repopulating the glens and this has coloured to some extent the movement for better or for worse. The Factors of course would and did disagree.

We see an important change in 1883-84 with an extension of the political franchise, a move which gave many Highland Crofters the vote for the first time and would have a big impact on the future fourth Duke of Sutherland who was Lord Stafford in the early 1880s. Lord Stafford as the future fourth Duke had sat in the Sutherland County Seat since 1874 but had only bothered turning up to the House of Commons 11 times. In 1886 the son of a Crofter, a Sutherland Crofter, Angus Sutherland, contested the seat and was elected to Parliament.

So, a big impact on the national political scene, we can see things are changing, perhaps that traditional loyalty to the Ducal family was beginning to weaken among the Sutherland Crofters and it also had a local impact. If you go back to McIver, up until the 1880s in the Highlands, Factors had regarded their seats on local boards, the poor boards, the education boards, as a kind of automatic privilege, just another aspect of their role if you like. But McIver reported into 1885 a big change among the local Crofters and their attitudes to this. He wrote to the Commissioner, I'll quote from McIver, *"there was a very striking proof of the efforts of agitation among the Crofters. There was never any interest taken by the electors and in the constitution of the parochial board since 1845 when the Poor Law was introduced. There are four elected members and on Wednesday a crowd of men and women appeared and for the first time there was voting for various people all connected with the established church to be thrown out and four members of the free church to be appointed"*. In a like manner he says, continuing with McIver, *"since 1872 there had been no contest for election of members of the school board. There are now 11 candidates for seven seats, and I was told a strenuous effort is to be made to have no one connected with the estate or established church on the school board"*. So, a massive reduction in the Factors' local political power.

Obviously if they're on the poor boards, they were often the chair of the poor board as well, they could control who went on the poor board as well. So, these kind of losses of power were very important to figures like McIver. Remember McIver was appointed 1845 and is used to ruling the Scourie with a kind of iron rod of discipline and this is being taken away from him in the 1880s. We mustn't forget, if we're trying to think why this power is being reduced, we need to remember the work of urban Highlanders and campaigners as well as the example of active agitation in other parts of the Highlands such as Skye and Lewes. But most interestingly, I think, it was the legacy of the Clearances in Sutherland that galvanised crofter agitation in that County in particular. Obviously, the Highland Clearances are important everywhere in the region but in Sutherland it takes on a more bitter tone, I think.

And this grievance, the Clearances, was directed specifically at the Sutherland estate management. So even though all the Factors in-post in the 1880s had nothing personally to do with the Clearances that happened before their time, the grievance was still directed at them specifically. It was a still raw grievance. It could be easily tapped into and exploited and nowhere more effectively than in Sutherland. Sutherland after all, their Clearances have been so rigorous both in the physical extent of clearance and also, I think, the ideological justification behind them as well. I think the Clearances in Sutherland were unmatched in the rest of the Highlands.

Additionally, no other landowning family was quite as sensitive to public criticism over the clearance policy than the Sutherlands. I should point out here that this was not a feeling shared by the Factors. The Factors had no problems with the Clearances and would write among themselves being annoyed with the Ducal family for being, as they saw it, so weak on what they saw as a historical irrelevant issue. That's how the Factors see the Clearances.

I think one example can suffice here as to how much of a political issue the Clearances become in Sutherland for the Factors and the Ducal family. That's because it wasn't just the crofters who had to live with the memory of the Clearances. In much of the evidence to the Napier Commission, the name of Patrick Sellar was raised. You don't need me to tell you who Patrick Sellar is, I'm sure. To the crofters, of course, he's an historic enemy and they would habitually blame Sellar, not the Ducal family, for the crueller aspects of the Clearances. We're talking about the burning down houses, destroying property, the kind of cruel elements. Interestingly, he was often called a Factor by the crofters, although he never was officially. He was a clearance agent of the estate and then a tenant of the estate. It does create a massively controversial link between the agent and then the beneficiary of the Clearances, but he was never a Factor. I've often wondered whether the terrible reputation Highland Factors have, right up until more modern times, is because the name of Sellar is associated with that role. Nevertheless, despite Sellar's terrible reputation, two men did try to defend him in front of the Napier Commission in the 1880s. Two of his sons, Thomas and Patrick. Thomas went before the Napier Commission in Edinburgh to give a verbal defence of his father's actions and additionally published a book on the same subject. Patrick. His other son, Patrick Junior, if you like, had taken over the tenancy of his father's farms in Sutherland after his death. These were massive sheep farm lets and he asked the estate management for help in forming his brother's defence of his father. Patrick Sellar Junior believed that his family and the estate should work together to clear his father's name, or as he put it, I'm quoting, *"cleaning up some communistic ideas"*. But Joseph Peacock, the Dunrobin Factor, point blank refused to help. He thought that the issue, that is the issue of the Clearances, should simply be laid to rest. Firstly, because he believed it to be in the irrelevant past. Like all the Factors, they thought the Clearances were just a non-issue, essentially. Secondly, Peacock thought

that if the debate on the Clearances was continued, it would just keep the issue in the public limelight and affect the family's name and estate. So he wrote to Patrick Sellar Junior, and I'm quoting, *"you are aware that I have no personal knowledge of the operations you refer to in 1812 and 1819. The fact cannot be questioned that the tenants were removed from certain districts to make way for the introduction of sheep farming. Do you think it can be of any great importance to lay before the commission the date of each particular transaction and the name of the respective sheep farmers put in possession of the land? To attempt to do more will, I respectfully submit, only invite further discussion about matters in detail"*. So, in other words, get lost! Peacock took a practical view of Clearances, he neither denied them but he wouldn't discuss them either.

And this was the general position of all the estate management in the 1880s. So I think the position we're getting to now is that the expectations of the crofting community were radically changing but the question is were the Factors? Had the Factors realised these expectations were changing? We can look at how the Sutherland Factors dealt with this avalanche of criticism in the 1880s by examining their appearances before the Napier commission.

Because all three of the Factors stood and gave evidence to the commission as well as the Commissioner, Sir Arnold Kemble, the Duke stayed well away. And we can compare tonight two Factors. First of all, my friend Evander McIver, the Scourie Factor, and John Crawford, the Tongue Factor.

So, the first to meet the commission out of the whole of the estate management was Evander McIver, a 73-year-old veteran of the famine and Clearances of the 1840s and 50s. He had the bitter nickname, 'the King of Scourie', and it wasn't a compliment. Authoritarian by temper, he put his faith in crofter discipline. He believed that the crofting system itself was a failure. Unfortunately for McIver, he was appointed 1845 and he had to oversee the crofting system, which he fundamentally just did not believe in. And his evidence shows this. He started off by telling Lord Napier about the estate expenditure lavished on feckless crofters, pointed out that crofters regularly broke estate rules, failed to improve their position by taking the step of separating farming from fishing. That was McIver's great hobby horse and suggested that half of the population of Scourie should emigrate to ensure the prosperity of the remainder. He also claimed that dissatisfaction on the part of the crofters was just part of a general dissatisfaction of poor people. So, he said, under every proprietor and Factor, let them be kind and good and liberal as they may, there will be some dissatisfied spirits. He also argued that the large sheep farmers were of the most benefit to the proprietor. Because as he said, I quote again, *"it is always desirable for the landlord and the county that the tenantry should be thriving and prosperous. There is nothing more trying than a poor tenantry to the proprietor"*. McIver was in fact later recalled before the Napier commission to answer specific charges made against him in later evidence. The charges were, I quote, *'severity towards widows'*, a classic example of Factorial tyranny. In fact, I've never been able to find any evidence of what they meant by severity towards widows, or any evidence that he was severe towards them. So, I'm not sure about that accusation. But it certainly reflects a widespread feeling of resentment and also fear towards the figure of the Factor. McIver refused to be drawn on the question of the Clearances. All he would say is that they were not intentionally cruel. But he just tried to avoid the question altogether. He said, *"that is going back to a time before you or I was born and is a subject on which I have no knowledge, whatever"*. So overall, I think McIver's evidence presents an interesting paradox, displayed by many of the landlord lobby at this time. He criticised crofting as a system. He just did not believe in it as an economic system. And he felt that prosperity was just impossible under a crofting system. But on the other hand, he, along with his colleagues, point blank refused to think of any form of landlord reform. He would not accept a reform on any measure.

Now we can compare McIver's evidence to that of his colleague, John Crawford, the Tongue Factor. His performance was quite different in tone and style to that even of McIver and his other colleagues. And indeed, he was nearly sacked for his performance in front of the Napier Commission. Crawford was aggressive, sarcastic, dismissive, and crucially, made some disrespectful comments about the local Free Church Minister. There was a reckless lack of caution in his evidence. And this makes accusations of tyranny, official arrogance, easily believable. I should say at this point that Crawford, by 1883, was almost completely deaf. So he may have had real problems in the tense public settings of the Napier Commission. But that said, the estate was furious with his performance. He eventually retired in 1885 under cloud of displeasure. The Commissioner had made it clear to him that the Duke was ready to sack him on the spot once his evidence came out in the newspapers. Crawford, his style of management was just no longer tenable. His style was arbitrary and his judgment questionable. He was let off with an honourable retirement as a mark of respect for the decades of service he provided. But essentially, that type of Factor management was at an end.

So, if I can just give you a few conclusions, if you don't mind giving me a couple more minutes. I think we can say that from the examples I've given you of McIver and Crawford, how the Factors responded to accusations of tyranny was either confused or just downright hostile.

In 1883, only a year after the outbreak of the Crofters' War, it's really too soon to see any big changes in the way the Factors saw themselves, their place in society, and crucially, how they see the Crofters and Cotters that they rule, essentially. This is especially the case on the Sutherland estate. The incumbent Factors there had been in post for a minimum of 23 years. In McIver's case, he'd been in post nearly 40 years. Now, all of these issues, I think, point to a fundamental conclusion, which is that there was an inability on the part of the estate staff, the older generation, to adapt to their new position in relation to the Crofters. Accustomed to, but also believing it completely necessary to have, complete dominance over Crofters, to maintain what they called discipline. In the correspondence, it's always Crofters' discipline. Older Factors were simply repelled by the idea of Crofters' political rights from the 1880s. However, there was little they could do to retain their status, and what I've been finding in my new project is that you see this kind of big sea change in the role of Factors, that they're moving from being local kings in the 19th century to essentially just land managers by the First World War.

The Sutherland Estate management, as I hope I've shown, far from being a kind of smooth running, united machine, was in fact an often tortured, over elaborate structure, and really ill-equipped to deal with the challenges that the 1880s were bringing. The sheer number of people it took to run the estate resulted in lots of competing priorities and opposition. The Factors were often arguing among themselves much more than arguing with the Crofters. As I've hopefully shown, the effort required to make the kind of adjustment of the 1880s was just too much for many of the Sutherland Factors. Crawford and Peacock retire in 1885. McIver hangs on to 1895, but he's kicking and screaming all the way. And they ended their careers disappointed men.

I mentioned at the start that McIver wrote a memoir, '*Memoirs of a Highland Gentleman*' he called it. And when he was looking back on the 1880s, he was writing just at the turn of the century, this is what he had to say.

"The Crofters on the Sutherland estates had been treated with kindness, and for 30 years after I became Factor, they were easily managed in the Scourie district. That's a bit of a lie. Anyway, they had confidence in my sense of fairness and justice as their Factor, and rents were paid as a rule with regularity. In short, it was satisfactory as compared with most Highland estates with Crofter tenants. But once the excitement and agitation sprung up, the Sutherland Crofters became dissatisfied. The subject of the removals from Strathnaver and times long gone by was revived and rehearsed in exaggerated colours and open rebellion broke out. Time will open the eyes of the Crofters to the fact that their ideas and expectations as to the benefits and advantages they were to obtain, which have been so grossly and extravagantly exaggerated by agitating land leaders, are not to be realised". McIver, along with his colleagues, never changed his views about the Sutherland Crofters. After 50 years of complete domination over them, he could not accept their new political confidence or their new legislative rights under the 1886 Crofters Act.

And this perhaps goes some way to explaining the belief then of factorial tyranny in Sutherland.

(Applause and thanks by the Chair of the Dornoch Heritage Society George Munro.)