

No. 2.

ROV. JOHN McLEAN to Mr. FRASER MACKINTOSH, M.P.

F. C. Manse, Tarbert Harris,
 By Stornoway,
 February, 2, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE been waited upon by a number of crofters and cottars on Lord Dunmore's property in South Harris, with the request that I should write you in their behalf. They are very anxious to emigrate to America, if they are helped any way to do so. Their crofts are very small, and for several years back their crops have been very miserable, owing to the inclemency of the weather and the poverty of the soil. A few years ago an appeal to the public had to be made in their behalf, for food and for seed to put into the ground, and this year they are quite as needful. Both their potato and grain crops were damaged by storms of wind that occurred in Autumn last, so that many got next to nothing out of the ground, and the potatoes they did gather were scarcely eatable, as they never came to maturity. Then, the fishing was a failure last year, and to make things still worse there was very little price for cattle. The people see that they are year after year getting into a worse condition, with no prospect whatever of improvement, and they have come to the conclusion that the only radical and permanent cure for their present poverty and straits is to emigrate to where there is plenty of good land to be got. Lady Scott of North Harris sent eight families to Manitoba at her own expense last year, and these are sending home such good accounts of their position and prospects, and urging their friends to follow them, so that many are encouraged, and are even anxious, to follow. There are many of Lady Scott's tenantry who are hoping that her Ladyship will send them across this year, but it is not known yet whether she will do so. But the people of South Harris, on Dunmore's property, cannot expect their proprietor to do anything for them in that way, as he is not able to do so. They look to Government to help them, and wished me to write you in order that you would be kind enough to bring their case before Government. There is here an opportunity given Government to relieve the poverty of Highland crofters in the only way to secure them comfort. There are seven or eight townships on the South Harris estate connected with my congregation, and in each of them there is a congestion of population, caused chiefly by that baneful habit of dividing and sub-dividing their holdings, so prevalent here and in the Lewis. The Royal Commission, of which you were yourself a member, did recommend emigration as one of the remedies for the present unhappy state of things. And, seeing that people are now anxious that Government should send them, I trust they will interpose, and take advantage of the opportunity afforded them of helping poor