

Applications for Assistance to Emigrate.

N.B.—These applications are exclusive of the large number which were made personally to the Commissioners who visited the Western Islands in the Spring and Autumn of 1888.

No. 1.

PETITION to the LORD ADVOCATE from NATIVES of
BENBECULA.

Island of Benbecula,
Parish of South Uist,
September 27, 1886.

Unto the Right Honourable
J. H. A. Macdonald,
Lord Advocate.

HUMBLY SHLEWETH

THAT your petitioners are natives and residents of the island of Benbecula, parish of South Uist, and county of Inverness, are willing and desirous to leave our native homes, and emigrate to the North-West Territories of North America or New Zealand.

We have come to this conclusion because we have found it utterly impossible to eke out livelihood in our native island for the last number of years, owing to the following causes, viz.:—

1st. Natural barrenness of the soil, arising from having no mineral matter.

2nd. Prices on stock have fallen so low, and are still falling.

3rd. Kelp manufacture is gone, which was a help to some of the crofter population of the island.

4th. No improvements of any description carried on for a considerable time past.

5th. The island is densely over-populated, and shall not maintain more than one-third of the present population.

Your petitioners have for a number of years struggled in various ways to meet the various demands of our families, and found it an utter impossibility to make both ends meet.

We respectfully appeal to your Honour to take our circumstances into your serious consideration, and lay the same before Parliament on an early date, to grant us that assistance which shall enable us to proceed directly to some British Colony, where we shall be able to better our present miserable condition. Your petitioners sincerely hope that Parliament will grant us immediate hearing, so as to enable us to make the necessary preparations for leaving this destitute island as soon as possible.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

Here follow 28 signatures.
