

No

15/1/4

The state of our poor County seems at a crisis at present and little would surprise us to find the Farmers are in a miserable condition having not had for years a crop of either Corn or Barley and many have not seed to sow the ground - How then shall they be able to pay their Debt or the Rectors to pay the Sup<sup>d</sup> Duty & publick Burden

The Ministers high Offices for Discharge of the small & great Communion Elements, School Salaries, Compositions for Tithes, Tithes, Land Duty, Primitives, Churches, Church yards, School Houses, Ministers, Manse, Office houses, gardens, &c. &c. are or but a part and addition to these there are a long list of real religious expenses & give cause to complain that we pay too dear for our religion & if the Clergy reap where they do not sow & would exhort what it does not grow -

There is a need & extraordinary demand at present for established schoolmasters having additional Salaries if this was to be granted it will be a more intolerable load still & such Independent schoolmasters as they become independent would become more useful & regardless of Teaching & learn only to love it over both, Soulders & Tents who they would despise

If ever there was a time for lenity & for some regulation in these matters it is now or never they

Consequence would be dreadful & the said said  
Loyse. I think the saided interest here ought  
to goe w<sup>th</sup> if of Scotland in g<sup>o</sup>ul in opp<sup>o</sup> of my p<sup>o</sup>l  
Demands & exting redress in ag<sup>o</sup> Roll the the  
Loyse & General though & surely to be free from such  
meaner names & impositions and at liberty to  
chose such Teachers to y<sup>e</sup> Children as should  
best recommend themselves by their good beh<sup>o</sup>  
our & of qualifications & pay them more  
w<sup>l</sup>ly and not be subjected to such extra ordi  
nary set Staples to them

The abolition of Patronage & to have  
Popular Election of Ministers is also upon  
the Carpet, This would put all upon a  
level in a very important affair & in the  
main be attended w<sup>th</sup> the utmost satisfaction  
of both Consequences if not prevented

In my opinion the Vestry & Congrega  
tion ought to have a parat least office after  
a vacancy to deliberate & correspond w<sup>th</sup> the Patron  
to appoint one in place of the defunct one of  
Christine in one instance upon the Congregation  
to which I believe was the greatest & only cause  
of complaint & unanimously opposition & in fact  
but this would effectually remove all grievances  
and the vacant Staples at least for one  
year should be applied in repairing & re  
building the Manse &c and the Cure ought

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to be accepted upon these reasonable Terms  
which would give the matter full more agreement  
I have wrote some shall lately out due  
Subjects and I think all the gentlemen Directors  
and your selves to take this matter into your  
immediate Consideration and not to be all  
together silent & passive in such alarming  
Circumstances I hope you will lend your  
helping hand & Jam

Sir

Stourneville, N<sup>o</sup> 34

John G. Norton

Stromms  
Soluus Hunter  
10. April 1784.

M. Monroes  
Boston

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pica m  
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Letter from Joshua Johnston addressed to Mr Moncreif of Houston dated Stromness 10 April 1784.

Sir, The Fate of this Poor County seems at a crisis at present and little would compleat its Ruine The farmers are in a miserable condition having neither food for themselves nor fodder for thr. cattle and horses and many have not seed to sow the ground. How then shall they be able to pay thr. debts or the Heritors to pay the supr. Duty and publick burdens.

The ministers high prices for deficiencies of thr. malt steepend communion elemt. money school salary composition for Feinds Lend tack duty Building Churches Churchyards School houses ministers manues office houses gardens etc. at ~~such~~ exorbitant rates and additions to these threatened are a long list of real religious greivances and give cause to complain that we pay too dear for our religion and tht. the clargy reap where they do not sow and would extort when it does not grow -

There is a need and extraordinary demand at present for established schoolmasters having additional salaries. If this was to be granted it will be a more ~~an~~ untollerable load still and such steepend schoolmasters as they became independant would become more useless and regardless of Teaching and learn only to lord it over both Lairds and Tenants who they would despise -

If ever there was a time for lenity and for some regulation in these matters it is now. Otherwise the consequences would be dreadful. The land laid ley etc. I think the landed interest here ought to join w<sup>th</sup>. th<sup>t</sup>. of Scotland in genl. in opposing such demands and getting redress in thro. Both the Heritors and Tenants ought surely to be free from such incumbrances and impositions and at liberty to choose such Teachers to th<sup>r</sup>. children as should best recommend themselves by their good behaviour and thro. qualifications and pay them accordingly and not be subjected to such extraordinary set steepends to them.

The abolition of Patronage and to have Popular Elections of Ministers is also upon the carpet. This would put all upon a level in a very important affair and in the main be attended w<sup>th</sup>. the utmost confusion and thro. bad consequences if not prevented.

In my opinion the Heritors and Congregation ought to have a year at least free after a vacancy to deliberate and correspond w<sup>th</sup>. the Patron to appoint one in place of the usual method of thrusting in one unawares upon the congregation which I believe was the greatest or only cause of complaint animosity of opposition and division. But this would effectually remove

all greivances and the vacant steepend at least  
for one year should be applyed in repairing  
or rebuilding the manse etc. and the cure ought  
to be accepted upon these reasonable terms  
which would make matters still more  
agreeable.

I have wrote Gresham lately on these  
subjects and I think all the gentlemen Heritors  
and others ought to take these matters into their  
immediate consideration and not to be altogether  
silent and passive in such alarming  
circumstances. I hope you will lend your  
helping hand and I am

Sir

your most humble. servt.

[signed] Joshua Shuston

Stromness 10 April

1784.