



[Notes on the Challenges Facing the Scottish Crofters Union]

- History demonstrates clearly that a great deal if not all of the suffering endured by the crofting community came upon them because they were disorganised, divided and easy to pick on.
- After they endured unspeakable sufferings for a long, long time - they organised themselves into the famous land league.
- It would be more correct to say that sons of crofters in the cities, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Greenock, Inverness etc. organised the crofters into the land league.
- In this year of 1986 when we are celebrating the centenary of the 1886 first crofters act - crofters commission commissioned Dr. James Hunter to write a book on one of the principal champions of the crofters cause leading up to the 1886 Act.
- John Murdoch - Once the 1886 crofters act was on the statute book the land league started slipping out of existence.
- Once again the crofters of the seven crofting countries were divided and disorganised and they remained like that for 100 years.
- In 1986 we are celebrating the centenary of the 1st crofters act with a "Scottish Crofters Union" for the first time ever.
- A union with a full time, secretarial of director and secretary.
- We had 3,300 members out of a potential 12,000 crofters.
- The big question is - are the crofters going to support their own organisation?
- Are they going to neglect the first class opportunity that they have less failing to maintain membership for the sake of £8 a year - 16p a week?
- One thing is certain and that is, if the crofters fail to support their own union organisation they will never be another opportunity.
- No one or no body of men will ever again, within living memory, spend time and effort to organise another movement.
- In any case it would be a futile exercise because neither the H.I.D.B. nor anyone else will provide cash grants for any more organising efforts.
- Without grants it would be impossible to organise a Crofters Union.
- My conclusion therefore is that 'If we fail this time we fail for all time - and we will be worse off than if we had never tried to reform the Crofters Union because all the authorities and everyone else will then know that the crofters are disinclined and we are unable to unite.'

[ends]

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