P. Fraser to Capt. Payne

Ullapool Sept. 11th 1791

Sir

I beg leave again to take the liberty of addressing myself to you from this remote part of the country. Since my last from Tobermory we have had a very pleasing excursion through the greatest part of the Hebrides rendered the more delightfule by a course of the finest weather almost ever experienced at this season. It is however a melancholy consideration that the further we have proceeded we have observed the encreasing spirit of emigrating to america.

In this part of empire a cheiftain formerly rendered himself of consequence by the number of men he could lead into the field and his influence at court was generally in proportion to the number of his followers.

After the abolition of the feudal system Goverment renewed the same or rather adopted the same policy and wisely encouraged the gentlemen of the highlands to enter into the service of goverment and afforded by that means employment for the redundant population of this country in the armies of great Britain. A relaxation of this policy on the part of Goverment, the return of Peace and above all the extension of sheep farms which are found well calculated for the climate & soil have occassioned a rapid revolution in the oconomy of the proprietors. Their avidity has been excited by the offers made of advanced rents and they have been led to disregard the ancient prejudices and predilections for the people. The inattention of the present administration to relieve this country from the coal duty and the hardships of the salt laws render it impossible for the people who are

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deprived of their farms to employ themselves in manufactures or to take advantage of their insular situation by employing themselves in the fisheries. Driven from their possessions and without the means of even acquiring subsistence they have no other resource left than to abandon their country for America to which they are invited by letters from their friends who have gone there before them and where the united States have received with open arms. To treat this interesting subject as it deserves and to propose a remedy adequate to the evil is no easy task. But to interfere in such a case I cannot helps thinking would be highly becoming the Benevolent character of H.R.H.

I have every where impressed the people with the greatest confidence in his affectionate regard to their interests and so well am I convinced of the loyalty & fidelity of the people in these counties

that I am persuaded it is highly for the interests of the House of Brunswick to patronise and cherish so extensive a nurse of brave men who will always be a firm support to the rights of the throne and who have conquered their enemies and extended their glory through every part of the world.

~~I have however~~ It is however but Justice to say that there are some great & enlightned men ~~who~~ in these countries who consider that their extensive possessions are not given to them solely for their own benefit and who disdaining the means of encreasing their revenues by banishing the people ~~and~~ by a noble adherence to the exalted principles of their ancestors justly deserve the love & veneration of all men.

Amongst these the Duke of Argyle & the Earl of Breadalbane stand foremost in regard. From their estates there is no emigration nor have the

people any desire to try their fortunes in America. Altho' it is well known that these noblemen if they could be induced to pursue the same system which is pursued by others might greatly encrease their revenues. The Earl of Breadalbane in particular might by introducing large Sheep farms add a third to his revenue but it would be at the expence of losing some thousands of people. Mr Mackenzie of Seaforth deserves also to be mentioned in this band of Patriots. He has in his retirement from political life been incessantly employing himself in improving the Island of Lewis the most desolate in appearance of all the Hebrides. His attempts have been attended with great success and the hopes of the people from his continued attention have entirely prevented the spirit of emigration from extending itself to that Island. The improvements he has made in two years encite astonishment and his plans for introducing manufactures & agriculture amongst a rude and wholly

ignorant people deserve the highest praise. The love & veneration which he thereby obtains from his people must be a high satisfaction to a good mind and he thereby keeps up as fully as in feudal times all the power and influence of a Highland chieftain.

Intreating your forgiveness for this long detail I shall not at present trouble you with any further discussion. I have communicated the benevolent intention of the Prince of granting settlements on Dartmoor and it has been received with the most grateful sentiments. And as soon as an arrangement is made I shall be able to bring some industrious men to cultivate that forest from the country.

My journey to this country will not I am

confident impede any measures for that purpose at the same time that I have obtained much usefull information which confirms my opinion of being able to render that part of His R.H. property an additional source of revenue to His R.H. and of wealth to the country. My Colleague has at my request proceeded to Dartmore. And he can easily without my aid arrange his system respecting the increase of the Princes revenue from the Mines in the forest.

I have never been very sanguine respecting the advantages from that source. It is from the land that the most certain benefits are to be expected and I hope such an arrangement will be made with Mr Buller by the council as will enable us to proceed with full effect.

With the highest sense of my obligations to you

I am Sir

Your most Hble Servt

Ry Fraser

If you should honour me with any commands my address is at the Earl of Breadalbanes Taymouth

Mr Procter

11 Sept

J. Payne Esqr

Mr Procter
Received 11 Sept
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