

Tha an litir seo, agus am pàipear-taic a tha na cois, air a gleidheadh ann an Taigh tasgaidh nàiseanta na h-Albainn, Dùn Èideann (NRS, Com 1/194). Chithear tàr-sgrìobhainn dhan litir seo agus am pàipear taic gu ìosal. Chan eil ceann-latha air an litir ach is iongantach mura deach a sgrìobhadh uaireigin tràth ann an 1975.

*This letter, undated (but probably written in the first half of 1975), and the attached appendix are kept in the National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh (NRS, Com 1/194). A full transcript follows:*

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## **Comunn Oiseanach Oilthigh Ghlaschu**

(Glasgow University Ossianic Society)

Hon. President: Mr John Murray  
President: Allan MacDonald  
Secretary: Morag Robertson  
Asst Secretary: Norman Macleod  
Treasurer: Roderick Maclean

8 Southpark Terrace  
Glasgow, G12 8LG

The Secretary,  
Annan Committee on broadcasting  
Waterloo Bridge House  
Waterloo Road  
London,

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish, on behalf of the above society, to protest against present provision for Gaelic on BBC radio and television. I enclose a copy of a statement we handed to Robert Coulter of BBC Scotland of a protest against the recommendations of the Crawford Committee on broadcasting.

Thank you,

Allan MacDonald

(President)

PS. Membership: c. 100. Affiliated membership, c. 150.

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**TO, Mr Robert Coulter, Controller, BBC Scotland.**

We are very concerned about recent public statements by yourself and by D.P. Walker, head of programmes, BBC Scotland, in connection with Gaelic broadcasting.

For example:

“the new Inverness station.... ...will have a Gaelic ‘wing’ of programme makers whose objective is to expand from the present three hours weekly to at least treble that air time in the **immediate future**” [Robert Coulter, “Guardian,” 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 1974].

“our ultimate aim is 10 to 12 hours of Gaelic broadcasting a week...” [D.P. Walker, “Radio Times, 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1974].

ACCORDING TO THE CRAWFORD COMMITTEE REPORT ON BROADCASTING COVERAGE, published 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1974:

“the BBC.... ...plan to start from the summer of 1975 a localised Gaelic service building up over a period of 12 – 15 hours a week... The BBC’s intention is to maintain the present level of Gaelic broadcasts on Radio Scotland, selecting items from the programmes produced by the new service...” [para. 104].

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT YOUR OWN AND MR. WALKER’S STATEMENTS ARE NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH EACH OTHER; AND THAT NEITHER COINCIDES WITH THE BBC PLANS AS STATED TO THE CRAWFORD COMMITTEE.

IT IS TIME YOU STOPPED MESSING ABOUT WITH GAELIC BROADCASTING!

WHY WERE ALL MONDAY – FRIDAY BROADCASTS TRANSFERRED TO VHF, when, ACCORDING TO BBC SCOTLAND’S OWN INFORMATION, THOUSANDS OF GAELIC LISTENERS in the Western Isles, in the Inner Hebrides, Argyll and Western Scotland ARE NOT SERVED BY VHF TRANSMISSIONS? You BANISHED GAELIC FROM THE AIR for these people living in what you have called “THE HEART OF GAELDOM.”

**WHY** was the transfer carried out AT A FEW WEEKS’ NOTICE?

**WHY** was there NO ADVANCE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN to inform people clearly of the need to obtain VHF sets fitted with sockets for outside aerials; and to tell the unfortunate thousands not served by VHF that they do not need to waste their money on purchasing equipment?

**WHY** do you and other BBC men utter such rubbish as “while some of our 5 million non-Gaelic listeners can enjoy the music of the Gaels, the increasing range of spoken

word material was unacceptable to them..." [Robert Coulter, "Guardian," 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 1974].

5 MILLION LISTENERS TO RADIO SCOTLAND IN SCOTLAND? WHO ARE YOU KIDDING, Mr Coulter? The Crawford committee certainly doesn't believe this: "Radio Scotland does not attract a high proportion of the audience..." [para. 103, Crawford Committee report].

GAELS DO NOT WANT A "GAELIC WING" IN INVERNESS – WE ALREADY HAVE A GAELIC "WING" IN GLASGOW.

WE DEMAND: - A GAELIC VHF RADIO STATION SERVING THE GAELIC AREAS.

AND: PROVISION OF FULL VHF COVERAGE OF GAELIC AREAS FROM ISLAY TO THE BUTT OF LEWIS.

AND: ADEQUATE BROADCASTING FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS (At present, the only school broadcast made is paid for by Ross & Cromarty County Council [Crawford Report, para. 104].

AND: ABOUT 10 HOURS WEEKLY GAELIC OUTPUT AT NATIONAL LEVEL TO PROVIDE A BASIC SERVICE FOR THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LISTENERS LIVING IN THE CITIES AND ELSEWHERE OUTWITH THE GAELIC AREAS.

AND: A MINIMUM OF ONE HOUR WEEKLY ON BBC TELEVISION. (Provision at present is "negligible" said the Crawford Committee [para. 63]).

Plans for anything less than these are plans for the wrecking of Gaelic broadcasting and of Gaelic itself – this at a time when, in the words of Mr. D.P. Walker, head of programmes, there is a "ground swell of revival" of Gaelic "taking place in many parts of Scotland" [Radio Times, 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1974].

BBC SCOTLAND'S POLICY FOR GAELIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF NEGLECT, and it is to the credit of the Gaelic department that they manage to produce good work against such attitudes from those at the top.

ARE YOU INTENT UPON CONTINUING THIS NEGLECT, MR. COULTER, OR WILL YOU GIVE GAELS, AT LAST, A FAIR DEAL BY GIVING US A GAELIC STATION AND THE OTHER FACILITIES DESCRIBED ABOVE?