

NRS, GD 45. Papers of the Maule family, Earls of Dalhousie. This collection includes the papers of Fox Maule as Under Secretary for the Home Department (1835-1841) and minister chiefly responsible for Scottish Affairs. Lord John Russell, to whom the petition is addressed, was the British Home Secretary, April 1835- August 1839.

NRS, 45/9/6. Petition, 1839, by the students of the Ossianic Society

To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department.

The Petition of the Ossianic Society of Glasgow University and of others favourable to the object in view.

Humbly sheweth,

That there in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland no fewer than five hundred thousand of Her Majesty's subjects, entitled from their patriotic conduct and by their steady loyalty to the attention of the British legislature, whose vernacular tongue is the Gaelic and who are incapable of receiving instruction, religious or secular, to any extent thro' the medium of any other language. That in the pastoral superintendence of this extensive population nearly three hundred ministers are at present employed, to whom an accurate and critical knowledge of the vernacular tongue is imperatively requisite for the effective discharge of their sacred trust and whose usefulness is almost entirely dependent upon their capacity of infusing instructors for officiating effectively is entirely overlooked in the present constitution of Scottish Universities wherein no opportunity whatever is afforded for requiring that thorough knowledge of the Gaelic which is essential and desirable. That all Highland students, more especially, such as have devoted themselves to theological studies, have long deplored this radical defect in the present educational system in our universities and the various evils and difficulties which it originates; and that they have for a length of time endeavoured of themselves to obviate these by convening, under the assignation of the Ossianic Society, for the sole purpose of assisting each other to the understanding of the Gaelic language, but they sadly experience that their utmost efforts are but nugatory & therefore form no adequate remedy.

That many others, besides, lament that they have no proper means of becoming acquainted with the Celtic language, which is not only essential for the divine, but also, "per se", of the

highest importance to the accomplishment of the philologist, the antiquarian and the historian. And this want is more particularly felt by Irish students, many of whom, having passed a curriculum in a Scottish University, are obliged to attend a session for the Celtic language in an Irish University that they might equally, & with greater advantage, acquire the same with other studies at the same time and place. Your Lordships petitioners would therefore humbly but earnestly suggest the urgent necessity of establishing a Gaelic professorship, of which they are convinced the beneficial results would be incalculable. In Ireland two such appointments have been made with the happiest consequences, and with the present instance, your Lordships petitioners not only anticipate great advantages and facilities in a religious point of view, but also that it would tend greatly to remove these barriers which obstruct the adoption & culturation of the English language & habit among the Highlanders & thus it w[oul]d ultimately unite under firmer and closer ties the Highlanders or Gaelic population with the English, surely a most important & desirable effect in a political point of view.

May it therefore please your Lordship to institute a Gaelic Professorship in Glasgow University, or to appoint a commission to inquire into the necessity & claims of such an appointment.

And your Lordships petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray,

L. MacCle[an ?] divinity. Student (?)
 I. MacLaurinn
 Duncan Clarke, student in divinity
 Hugh McDiarmid, student in divinity
 Wm (?) Gordon, student in divinity
 Hector Munro, student in Humanity
 David MacEwen (?), student in logic
 Archibald Buchanan, Logic Class
 Donald Fraser, student in Logic class
 David Lyon, Logic student
 William M. Watt, student in divinity
 Archd. Montgomerie, ethics class
 David D. Service, S. Ethics class
 John D. (?) McEuan, S. Ethic class
 John R. Peebles, Logic Class
 John MacIntosh, Greek class
 Peter Marshall, Humanity
 James MacNeill, Stud. Div.

Leonard Dobbie Elliot, A.M. St divy.
 James Cameron, Stud. Div.
 Robert Taylor, studt. Divinity
 James McNab, studt. M.B.
 John Carmichael, Nat. Phily. Class
 William Hay, student, S.C.
 James Stewart, Greek class
 Thomas Sommers, logic class
 George Young, Nat. Phil
 William Robertson, student divinity
 James Simpson, ethics students
 Adam Smith, Logic Class
 John MacLellan, Logic Class
 William Ferguson, Logic Class
 Archd. Campbell, Logic class
 John Lindsay, Humanities
 William Bell, divinity student
 Henry Anderson, Nat. Philosophy

Charles M. MacRae, chairman
 Finlay M'Nab, Secy.
 John Johnston, student of div.
 John Blair, A.M. student of divinity
 John Patterson, student of divinity
 Alexr G. Ross, student of moral philosophy
 Robert Ker, student, logic class
 Claudius B. Ker, Logic class
 Alexander Smith, S. Greek class
 John Macky, Nat. Class
 William M. Simpson, Ethc. Stud.
 Mr Symington, Logic Class
 Robert G. Dalzell, Nat. Philosophy
 Robert Ramsay, Greek class
 William Arthur Jones, Logic Class
 A. McR. (?) Campbell, Greek class
 Robert Smith, Humanity class
 James Beith, Humanity C.
 Alex McParlan, stud[en]t Logic
 Thomas McNiven, student, humanity