The Tacksmen and their Successors

A Study of Tenurial Reorganisation in Mull, Morvern and Tiree in the Early Eighteenth Century

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This article considers problems of social and economic change in the former MacLean of Duart lands appropriated by the earls of Argyll, and particularly the effects of the abolition of the system of great tacksmen in 1737. Based on a large body of unpublished documentary evidence, much of it only recently made available at Inveraray Castle, it reassesses the respective parts played by the family of Argyll and their tacksmen in the management of these insular districts and questions the accepted view that the tenurial reorganisation vastly improved conditions for the tenants in general.

'We have now entered finally on the times of peaceful industry' (Argyll 1887:263). In these words George, 8th Duke of Argyll, an outstanding champion of Victorian property and progress, summed up the tenurial reorganisation which his forbear had introduced into Morvern and the neighbouring islands of Mull, Tiree and Coll.* Its architects, John, 2nd Duke of Argyll, and his friend and Commissioner, Duncan Forbes of Culloden, Lord President of the Court of Session, would have been gratified by such a verdict. Forbes especially would have been rejoiced to know that as a consequence of his strenuous weeks of diplomacy and discomfort in the Inner Hebrides in the late summer of 1737, that clannish region had become a land of opportunity, progress and industry.

The Lord President had been principal manager of the Duke's business affairs since 1716 but it required a matter of unusual importance to bring him so far from the capital. Routine administration was left to the Chamberlain of Argyll or to one of his junior colleagues. The object of this expedition, however, was no less than the total reorganisation of the tenurial system that had hitherto governed the Duke's insular estates.

Culloden recorded the success of his mission in a report to the Duke immediately after his return to Inveraray (CCR 1884:387–394). It expressed the sober satisfaction of a man who had carried out a difficult assignment to the best of his ability. Great tacksmen, or tenants-in-chief, had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly of the Duke's northern estate and had supported their kinsmen and followers on their holdings as sub-tenants.

* See map on page 95, and frontispiece (plate vi).

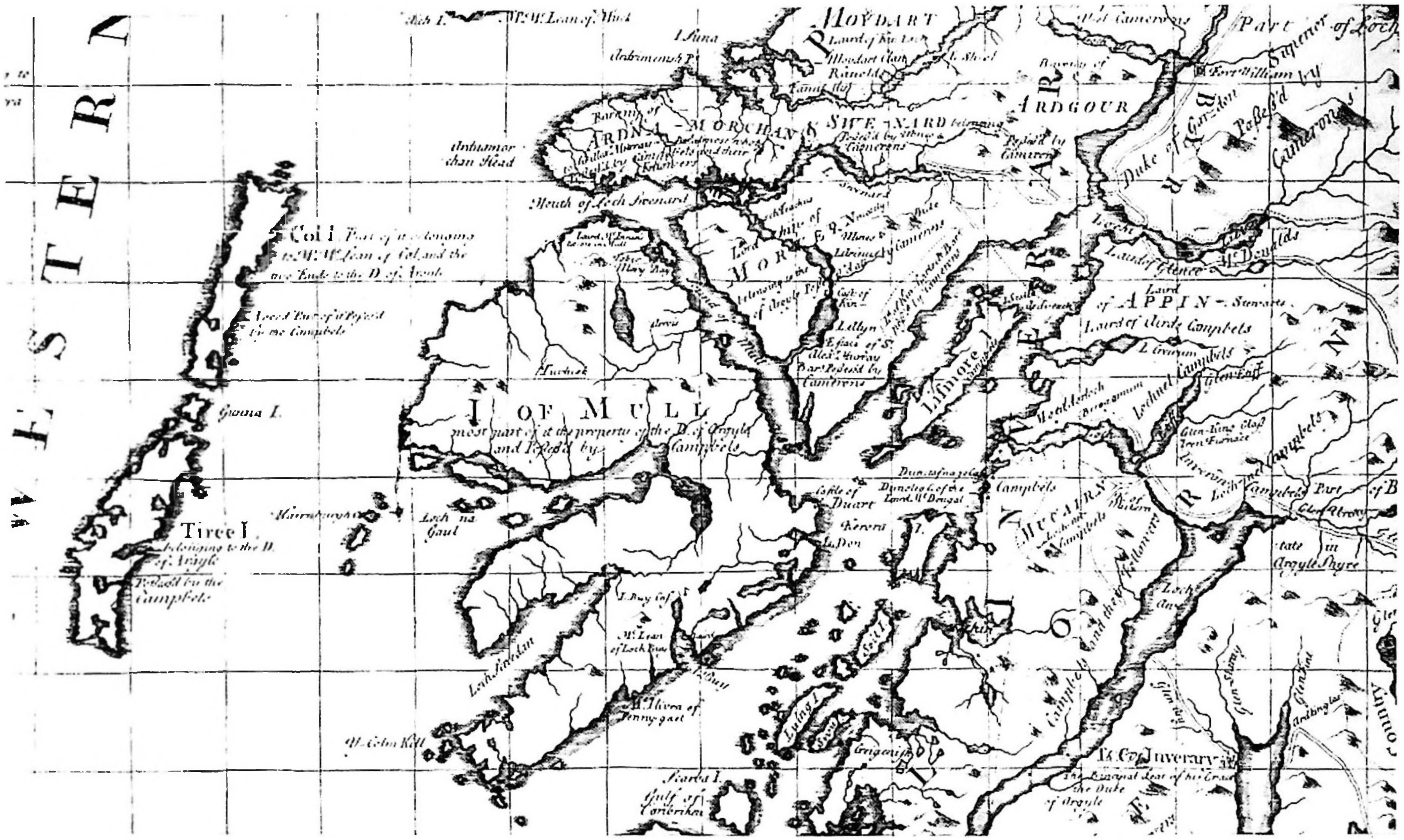

PLATE VI. Part of Argyll, showing ownership and occupation of land, 1734. From a map by I. Cowley, plate 2 in Sir Alexander Murray's *The True Interest of Great Britain, Ireland and our Plantations*, London 1740.

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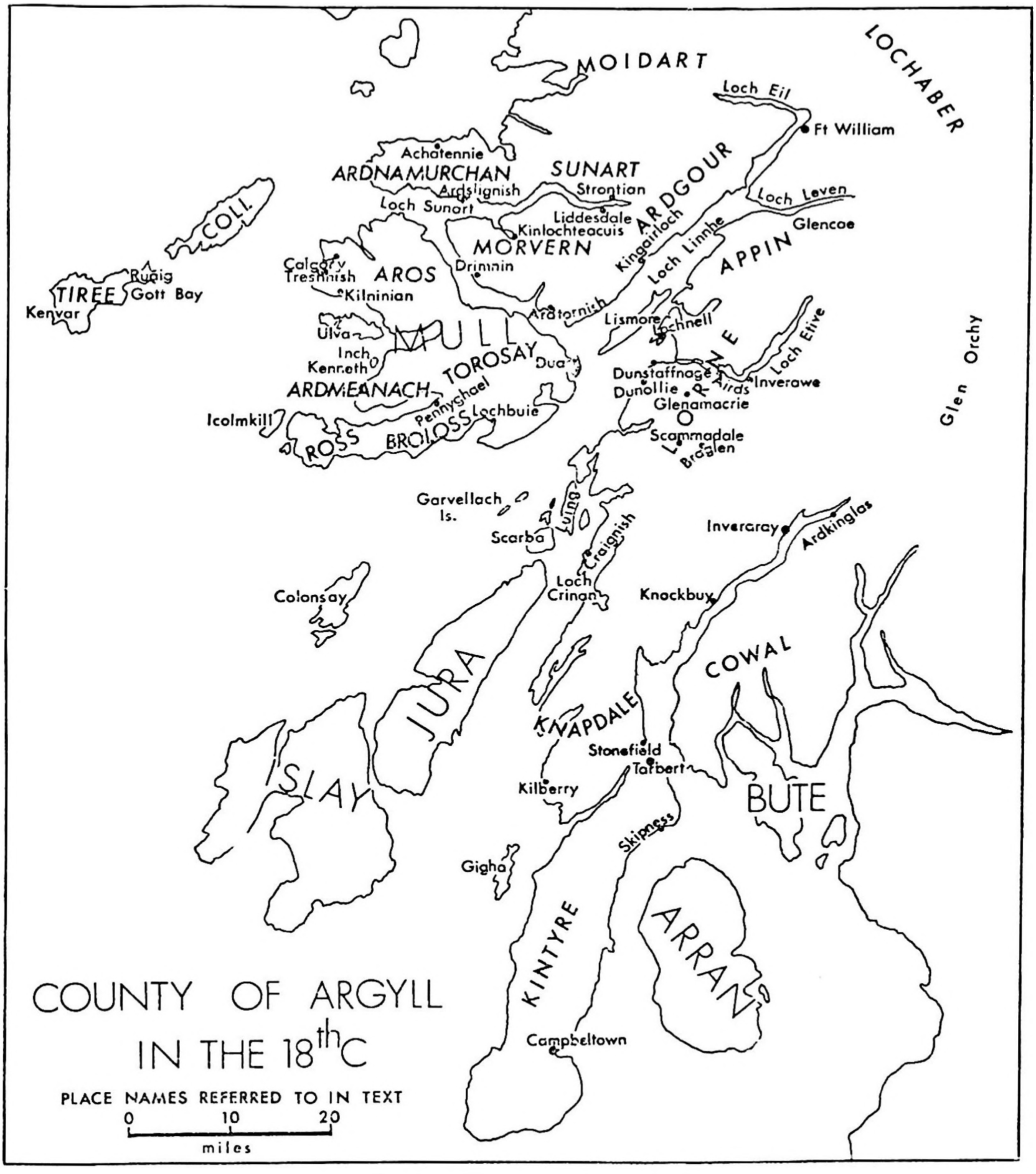
This was the custom on all Highland estates where the proprietor was a clan chief. Tacksmen were sometimes functionaries in the chief's service, such as harpers, historians and poets; sometimes heads of allied but unrelated followers; but most were relatives of the chief and heads of lineages or groups of kinsmen tracing their descent from the founder of the clan. The tacksmen were thus the chief's mainstay, serving to unify the clan proper of blood relations, and by their wider authority over their locality binding together all the diverse groups dwelling in the clan's territory into a political entity (Cregeen 1968:161–5). Culloden reported that he had removed these tacksmen and put in their place some hundred of tenants, large and small, to hold their farms directly of the Duke under written leases and on modern conditions. No longer subject to traditional prestations and labour services to the great chieftains, they would, he claimed, transform the backward agriculture of these remote districts, and under the beneficent guidance of their landlord bring undreamed-of prosperity both to themselves and the Duke of Argyll. Such were the sanguine predictions of Culloden's report.

The mission was a notable victory for the Lord President. A man no longer young, travelling in physical discomfort in wet and boisterous weather (with no other protection than his rhubarb and gum pills), handicapped moreover by ignorance of the language, he had confronted and overcome a formidable coalition of interests in Mull and Tiree. By a series of skilful moves, and with the aid of his travelling companions, he had induced the sub-tacksmen and sub-tenants to bid for leases in defiance of the tacksmen, and now returned to Inveraray with most of the lands let at higher rents. The 8th Duke summed up the financial achievement thus: 'In the final result, Culloden had the satisfaction of reporting that these large insular estates had been re-let, with some little immediate increase of rent, and such new conditions, as would lay the foundations of indefinite improvement for the future' (Argyll 1887:259). And his general conclusion on the great tenurial changes is contained in his comment on the terms of the new leases: 'In these words we see the symbol and consummation of a change which amounted to a revolution. In the abolition of all services, except a few strictly limited and defined, which were for purposes directly connected with the benefit of a whole district or of a large community, we see the last step, or almost the last, from the mediaeval to modern conditions of society. In the admission of a class to the benefits of leases who had hitherto been always tenants-at-will, and had in practice been often compelled to move from the necessity either of seeking protection or of rendering service, we see the elevation of a large portion of the people from a state of complete uncertainty and dependence, to a state in which they could rely, and could make others rely, upon definite engagements' (Argyll 1887:261–2).

In this view, an oppressive traditional system of land-tenure and social relations was swept away, and in its place there was established a beneficent modern system that opened the doors to technological advance, expanding production and higher revenues, and gave the mass of the people, for the first time, a measure of freedom and security. There appear to have been no snags and no disappointments. Partly because of the



County of Argyll and neighbouring districts in the 18th century.

persuasiveness with which both Culloden and the 8th Duke presented the case, partly perhaps because of a general predisposition in most people to identify change with progress, their eulogistic view of the tenurial reorganisation gained a ready acceptance, and with it Culloden's sweeping condemnation of the tacksmen. An authoritative modern textbook, for example, contains the statement (probably reflecting an attitude general among historians): 'In 1737 Forbes of Culloden reported on the tyranny and oppression of tacksmen in Mull, Morvern and Tiree, and his assessment was confirmed time and again in the course of the eighteenth century' (Hamilton 1963: 48).

The 8th Duke himself demurred against Culloden's extravagant attack on the tacksmen. They were, he said 'gentlemen in the best meaning of the term—men incapable of a dishonourable action, and disposed to deal as justly and humanely with their inferiors as was consistent with the standard of obligation universally recognised in their day and generation' (CCR 1884: 384). There is moreover a great deal of contemporary or near-contemporary literature to suggest that they were not the unfeeling monsters that Culloden represented, and this is supported by studies by modern historians like I. F. Grant and A. McKerral.[1] Perhaps the chief reason for treating Culloden's remarks with caution is the important role played by the tacksmen as the native leaders and natural cement of Highland society, a role which Dr Johnson observed and appreciated (Johnson 1825: 106–110, 172); and of all the commentators, travellers, reporters and observers in the Highlands in the eighteenth century, many of them notable, none brought to bear on the Highland scene so profound an insight into the nature of this society. If they were to be banished he predicted that the chief, who depended on their company, would depart and the whole society decay: 'If the tacksmen be banished, who will be left to impart knowledge or impress civility?'

The time is ripe for a re-examination of the circumstances that led to the tenurial changes of 1737 and the part that the tacksmen had played in the earlier system. It is equally important to draw attention to the aftermath of these revolutionary changes and to reconsider the justice of the 8th Duke's conclusions. This article, in dealing with these problems, will be largely based on documentary material. Some of this material was known to the Duke, but probably the greater part was unknown to him and has not previously been studied.

The Argyll Conquest and Settlement of the Duart Lands

The system abolished in 1737 derived from the conquest and annexation of the estate of MacLean of Duart by the 9th Earl of Argyll. The estate, which comprised the bulk of Mull and of Morvern, part of Coll, almost the whole of Tiree as well as a number of smaller islands, had been adjudged in 1659 to the 8th Earl (1st Marquess) of Argyll as the principal creditor of Sir Allan MacLean. The 9th Earl, restored to the estates of the forfeited Marquis in 1663, launched an invasion of Mull in 1674. The MacLeans resisted under Lachlan MacLean of Broloss—and more gallantly than the poet Ian Lom

represented—but the opposition had virtually collapsed by 1678–80, and the Earl proceeded to settle large tacks of land on prominent Campbell chieftains who had played a part in the conquest. The Earl's own forfeiture for his refusal to subscribe to the Test Act of 1681 and his execution for rebellion in 1685 gave the MacLeans a brief respite, but with the fall of the Stuarts in 1688 and the final forfeiture of the MacLeans of Duart in 1691 the Campbell hegemony of the western sea-board and islands of Argyll became finally established.[2]

The dominance of the earls, later the dukes, of Argyll over this western region depended almost entirely on the Campbell tacksmen and on the loyal settlers whom they introduced. The danger of insurrection was always present, and the MacLean chieftains, to whom the Jacobite cause was attractive, among other reasons, as a means of regaining their ancient lands, could count on the attachment of the native population. The tacksmen were thus of great political and strategic importance, occupying a role similar to that of the Campbell colonists and Lowland planters settled in Kintyre in the Civil War period (McKerral 1948:80–109), or the Scottish plantation in Northern Ireland in the early seventeenth century. They received from the Earls tacks (*i.e.* leases) of enormous extent and therewith power to settle their lands, to hold courts, to collect revenue, in particular cases to garrison castles, and in general to administer and regulate their tack-lands.

The earliest tacks went mainly to Campbell families who had been prominent in the expeditions against the MacLeans, in particular those of Inverawe, Dunstaffnage, Craignish, Auchinbreck and Lochnell, with their cadets, as well as Islay cadets of the Calder branch. There cannot have been much colonisation before the last decade of the seventeenth century, for the conflict revived during the 9th Earl's forfeiture. Moreover, before they could settle, the tacksmen and their followers had to remove the earlier tenants and resistance must have been common. Campbell of Inverawe, who received a tack of the extensive districts of Aros and Morenish in Mull in 1696, was bound 'within the space of three years after the term of Whitsunday to remove such of the gentlemen of the name of McLean as are at present tennents and possessors of the island as hereafter he shall be directed to . . . and shall not set the samen lands or any part thereof in tack or tennandry either to them or to any other gentlemen of the said name of McLean during his tack without the consent and approbation of the said noble Earle . . . be obtained thereto first in wryte' (ICP/M2 Tack to Inverawe).

Once the MacLeans and their friends were ejected—and a comparison of eighteenth century rentals with those of the seventeenth century is proof of the extent of their dispossession—it required only a decade or two to establish families of land-hungry Campbells, predominantly from the mainland district of Lorne, in the more fertile areas. Campbell of Stonefield, whose half-brother was among the colonists, reported the existence of three principal settlements in Mull in 1732—the Ross of Mull with Icolmkill, the south-eastern district of Torosay, and the northern district of Aros. These districts he described as 'sett in tack to gentlemen of the name of Campbell, who have

gone a good length to plant their several districts with people of the same name or their friends, and', he continues, 'it must be acknowledged that the tenants are beginning to manage their lands better than the rest of the countrey' (Argyll 1887:250; SL 3:39–40). The Ross was dominated by cadets of the Dunstaffnage Campbells, Torosay by cadets of Lochnell, who were also widely distributed in Aros (ICP/M—JR 1715; ICP/M—Rentals 1742 and later; ICP/M—G). Morvern was too much a Cameron stronghold to be healthy for Campbell settlement, and Tiree and Coll too remote, but several Campbell families do appear to have settled early in Tiree and numerous farms were held there by Campbells who actually resided in Mull. At the beginning of the eighteenth century these remoter islands were in tack to Sir Archibald Campbell of Cluanes, who belonged to a cadet family of the Calder branch,[3] but in 1716 Sir James Campbell of Ardkinglas received a nineteen year tack on condition that he planted Tiree and the two ends of Coll 'with tenants of the name of Campbell and such as have not taken part in the Rebellion, in place of the natives, who were for the most part guilty of the same' (Paton 1913:151; 1915:17).

The colonists were at first exposed to the raids and reprisals of the MacLeans, which reduced some to poverty, others probably to flight. Most of them, however, remained as a privileged, envied and sometimes hated minority. (Cregeen 1968:160) They may have shown occasional lapses and several settler families became suspect for their political or religious leanings, but normally the colonies were foci of loyalty to the Argyll ascendancy in the midst of a generally disaffected native population, and represented an element of considerable political and strategic importance in the West Highlands throughout much of the eighteenth century. Not only were they a source of military recruitment—and the tacksmen were obliged by their leases to serve Argyll with the 'haill tenants and inhabitants' of their tack-lands 'in all hostages and other lawful expeditions as oft and whenever they shall be desyred or required therto . . .' (ICP/M2 Tack to Inverawe)—but they maintained a vigilant watch over disaffected neighbours, acted as an unpaid police force, provided intelligence of value to the Duke and Government concerning the whole western districts and actively discouraged any symptoms of Jacobite or Popish activity.[4]

The efficacy of the Campbell system was very much dependent, however, on successful colonisation. In Morvern the Campbell system failed signally to guarantee law and order and loyalty to the Government. The Duart lands in this district had been controlled by the Camerons and their chief, Locheil. In 1679, after their annexation they were set in tack to Cameron of Glendessary (Exhibits:132). His tack expired in 1715 however and was not renewed. Instead Dugald Campbell of Craignish became tacksman (Paton 1913:155), and settlers were introduced. The attempt to colonise was a complete failure. Like the peasants of Flanders and north-east France who, under their 'droit de marché' defended their security of tenure against intruded tenants by acts of systematic violence (Bloch 1931:183–5), the Camerons refused to be outed and operated a highly effective system of intimidation. Craignish and his uncle complained to the

Duke two years after their tack commenced: 'Thus stands it with your tacksmen, and though the times are peaceable elsewhere, the government fixed and settled, they live as in a country yet to be conquered and still to be reduced to the peaceable possession of its proprietor and master.'[5] In 1717 the wretched tacksman had been robbed by the Camerons of the year's rents, and acts of terrorism—cattle-houghing, arson, threats—continued throughout the twenties and thirties, and proved so effective that would-be settlers were frightened away. Willy-nilly, Craignish had to sub-let his lands to the Camerons as had also MacLean of Ardgour and MacLean of Kingairloch. Thus the Morvern lands, in spite of the Duke of Argyll's legal title, continued to be in the actual occupation of the Camerons and therefore controlled by Locheil. It is not surprising that it proved one of the main recruiting grounds of the Jacobites in 1745.

In Mull and Tiree, the Campbell system enjoyed greater success. True, clanship was declining in the 2nd Duke's time. The transfer of tacks to new tacksmen who were willing to pay a higher tack-duty inevitably weakened the strategic aspects of the system (ICP* 191 'State of the Duke of Argyle's Affaires.' Aug. 1716), and the increasing use of the shire levies must have affected the position of the tacksmen as military leaders of the clan. None the less, in the islands the Campbell system did in fact serve to limit the areas of overt Jacobite activity. This was apparent in 1745, when there was no general rising here despite the widespread sympathy that the Jacobites enjoyed among the native population (Fergusson 1951:99; ICP various papers).

The system of tacksmen in the insular districts was not simply a nexus of economic relations. It had been designed not only for the collection of revenue but for the reduction of hostile districts to order, for the settling of loyal colonists, for the administration of justice and policing of wide areas, and for political and strategic purposes that went a good deal beyond the simple collection of rent. Although it proved a failure in Morvern, and in the islands—as will shortly be explained—was increasingly subordinated to the Duke's financial needs, the original functions of the great tacksmen continued to be in varying degrees highly necessary and actively exercised.

The Tacksmen and their Tenants

The tacksmen's holdings were not, in these recently annexed colonial territories, limited to the modest few farms characteristic of many Highland tacksmen.[6] Perhaps because of their colonial nature, they ranged over whole districts of many square miles, and each one was the equivalent of a considerable landed estate. In 1730 there were only seven tacksmen for the entire annexed lands. Icolumkill and the fertile Ross of Mull were in tack to Donald Campbell, brother to Campbell of Scammadale (a cadet family of Dunstaffnage). The enormous district of Aros in Mull was held by Archibald Campbell of Ballimore or Achatennie, brother to Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell, one of the most considerable of the Campbell chieftains. Torosay, the south-eastern district of Mull, was held by Colin Campbell of Braglen, another cadet of the Lochnell

branch. To two members of the clan MacLean, distinguished for their firm Hanoverian principles, were assigned other tack-lands in the west of Mull: Morenish to Donald MacLean of Calgary, Treshnish to Mr John MacLean, minister of Kilninian, who had succeeded Mr John Beaton as minister of Kilninian in 1702 and was learned in Gaelic history and literature (J. L. Campbell and D. Thomson 1963: xiv, 22, 23–35). The entire Morvern lands were in tack to Dugald Campbell of Craignish, and the Duke's property in Coll and Tiree to Sir James Campbell of Ardkinglas, though he was represented by three important sub-tacksmen, Campbell of Clenamacric, Campbell of Barnacarry and Alexander Maclachlan (CP 2970:183–187). The tacksmen paid tack-duties ranging from £900 to £4,000 Scots, averaging a sum probably above the rental of most estates in Argyll (ICP/M—R 1730).

Whether the tacksman resided or not (and only in Mull was residence customary) he sub-let most of his tack-land. The greater part of it, or even the whole, was rented to a fairly small number of gentlemen who were his kinsmen or friends. They held their lands on privileged conditions and sometimes enjoyed written leases continuing for the period of the chief tacksman's lease. They paid rents which, though higher than they had been in the late seventeenth century, were still relatively lower than those of the other sub-tenants (ICP/M—JR 1715; CCR 1884:388). Their holdings were commonly one, two, or more large farms, parts of which were in turn frequently sub-let.

The remainder of the tack-lands was sub-let to commoners who had a share in a jointly-held farm. Although their share in the land was small, these small tenants constituted the majority of a tacksman's sub-tenants. Duncan Forbes described these as 'ter tenants' in his report of 1737 (CCR 1884:388) and it was their interest that he claimed to be protecting against the oppressive tacksmen. They appear to have held on a year-to-year basis without written leases. Their rents were relatively higher than those of the sub-tacksmen (ICP/M—JR 1715), and although relaxations might be made in the event of general misfortune, their economic condition, being narrowly based, probably reflected fluctuations in trade and climate more quickly and sensitively than did that of the gentry. Their holdings, modest enough as they were, were further reduced by the widespread practice of sub-letting to kinsmen (Cregeen 1964:xxvii n).

A judicial rental of the Argyll lands of Morvern and Torosay taken in 1715 may be cited to illustrate how tacksmen allocated their lands. Torosay, in tack to Colin Campbell of Braglen,[7] consisted of twenty four pennylands.[8] Of these eight were let to thirty five joint tenants, whose average holding was rather more than a farthingland. The tacksman and his sons occupied four pennylands, and the remaining twelve pennylands were largely sub-let to six tenants—Archibald Campbell of Achindoun (3 pennylands), Donald Campbell of Achinard and his brother (2 pennylands), MacDougall of Ardmore ($2\frac{1}{2}$ pennylands), John McKinvine ($1\frac{1}{4}$ pennylands) and a family named MacPhail (1 pennyland). (This leaves out of account roughly two pennylands which were let in fairly modest shares but not to joint tenants.) Apart from a farthingland occupied by

MacLean of Kingairloch and the holding of the McKinvines or MacKinnons (who appear to have been anciently there), little had been left of the old ascendancy.

At the same period, Cameron of Glendessary, as tackman of the Morvern lands, held 115 pennylands. Of these only a small fraction was let to joint-tenants, whose holdings averaged about 1½ pennylands (but the pennyland was not much more than a third of the pennyland in Mull); 84 pennylands, or three-quarters of the whole area, were occupied as large holdings. If one excludes Glendessary's own twenty pennylands, the rest ranged from three to ten pennylands and averaged six, which in Morvern was the equivalent of three merklands. Thus, both in Mull and Morvern, the tacksman's holding approximated in size to the 2½ merkland characteristic of the south-west Highlands.[9] Both large tenants and small sub-let part of their lands. For example, one of the four tenants of Kenlochteacus, Donald McAlister VcConil (alias Cameron) had a two pennyland, or one merkland, as his share, paying the tacksman £4 sterling and various payments in kind. He in turn sub-let two small portions, one a farthingland and one a half pennyland, to sub-tenants of the same surname as himself, at a rent that allowed him a slight profit (£16 Scots for the half pennyland). A large tenant, John McEan VcEan VcWilliam (alias Cameron), occupying the five pennyland of Aulistine, sub-let three pennylands to three sub-tenants named Cameron. Almost two-thirds of the Morvern lands were in the occupation of Camerons. MacLachlans, MacEacherns and Mackays also appear as major tenants with holdings of 10, 11 and 5 pennylands respectively, but there is not a single Campbell named in the rental.

The tacksman reaped a profit as farmer of the rents of his district. In Tiree the tacksmen before 1737 received a money rent approximately 30 per cent above the tack-duty which they themselves paid to the Duke, *viz.* £423 as compared with £325 (CCR 1884:390). In Mull the tackmen's surplus was comparable (see note 29). Sub-tacksmen and sub-tenants also derived some advantage from sub-letting, but in monetary terms it was not a great deal, representing in Morvern and Torosay a sum which was a fifth above their own rent for the land concerned, or even less (ICP/M—JR 1715). Possibly the principal advantage was that sub-tenants helped a tenant to pay his casualties and were a source of labour. Of Drumcragaig farm, the Sheriff recorded that 'the sub-tacksman has no benefit by them but that they free him of his pressand [present] sheep' (ICP/M—JR 1715).

Casualties paid to the tacksmen over and above the rent included a variety of farm produce—butter, cheese, poultry, eggs, sheep, veals and the like, and in Tiree a certain quantity of linen cloth.[10] Some were, or had been, due at stated seasons, like the 'Yuill and Pace presands' [presents] paid in Morvern in butter, cheese and veals. Others were irregular, like horse corn due from tenants in Tiree when the laird visited the island (MacPhail 1914:291; and ICP various papers). Such payment in kind were consumed in the household of the laird or the tacksman as there was no market for them, except briefly in Morvern and Sunart in the neighbourhood of the lead-mining settlements (CCR 1884:390–1; ICP/L 'Minutes of Business 1744'). Casualties were valued at

about a sixth of the total rent in Mull in the late seventeenth century; as the eighteenth century progressed they came to be no more than a twelfth or a fifteenth of rentals in the Highlands (Walker 1812 Vol. 2:78). In addition to such casualties a supply might be required on extraordinary occasions, as for instance the cow claimed by Glendessary of each of his tenants when he purchased Lochbuy's lands in Morvern (ICP/M—JR 1715). At a tenant's death, the herezeld (heriot) was due to his master in the shape of his best beast or other property and in spite of having been abolished by Parliament in 1617, it continued to be levied well into the eighteenth century.

Beyond payments in money or kind, the tacksmen were accustomed to receive a variety of personal services from their tenants impossible to evaluate in money terms. The tacksman, as a chieftain of the clan, could require his tenants to follow him in the clan array or in creachs and other exploits. He could further require labour services in various kinds of agricultural work, in carriages, in thatching, cutting peats and the like. Exact data for the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are rarely available; by the second half of the eighteenth century a reliable observer estimated that sub-tenants generally worked regularly one day a week for the tacksman and extra days in seed-time and harvest so that over the whole year a third of the sub-tenants' time was at the tacksman's disposal (Walker 1812 Vol. 2:54–5, 79–81). Buchanan quotes an instance of an even heavier burden of services in Scalpay, Harris, but it is significant that he observes that they had increased vastly, having been formerly eight or ten days in the year (Buchanan 1793:52–3). Indeed the decay of local custom as the eighteenth century advanced may well have been accompanied in some cases by an increase in labour services, a situation which would find a parallel in the increasing burden of serfdom in Russia and Eastern Europe generally in the eighteenth century.[11]

Basically, the tenurial system which existed in the insular districts derived from traditional Highland clan relationships, in which claims to land and wealth depended on kinship to the chief or service to him. It neither aimed at nor achieved any sort of egalitarian social system. On the contrary, it was the duty of the commoners to maintain the gentry of the clan—the chief and the tacksmen, to follow them in war and serve them in peace.

Nevertheless in the clan system, aristocratic and hierarchic as it was, sentiment and ties of real or pretended kinship tended to soften the harsh lines of class distinction and to bind society together (Cregeen 1964: 161–5). Even on grounds of self-interest if on no other, chief and tacksmen were reluctant to lose tenants who were also fighting men, and assisted them in times of hardship by furnishing meal and other supplies, by waiving or reducing the rent or by allowing arrears to go unpaid for long periods.[12] Without entering here into a full examination of the social functions of the tacksmen, it is as well to recognise that they discharged important economic functions which their eighteenth-century critics usually overlooked. In a society which was conspicously lacking in capital, it was the laird and tacksmen who sustained much of the agricultural production by loans of seed grain, cattle, implements and work-horses under the system of 'steel-bow'—an arrangement which frequently enabled young tenants to graduate eventually

into farmers, with stock of their own.[13] Fishing depended a good deal on their provision of boats and nets (Anderson 1785:248; Gray 1957:115–18). As merchants they supplied isolated communities with essential goods and raw materials which no professional class of merchants existed to provide (Anderson 1785:165–7, 247–50), whilst by accepting rents in kind and organising the sale of these products in distant markets they performed the most important function of turning the Highlanders' products into cash.

One cannot assume, however, that even so early as 1720 or 1730, the norms of behaviour accepted in a more or less traditional society continued unaltered. Landed estates were beginning to come on to the market, a new phenomenon. In some parts of the Highlands it is evident that already a commercial outlook had begun to affect the relations of social classes. The wreck on the Irish coast of a vessel bound for the plantations brought to light in 1739 a sinister traffic in poor Highlanders carried on by certain Highland chiefs (Grant 1959:404–9). It represents an extreme case but it is significant of the stirrings of a profound change in social relationships in the Highlands.

'The Tyranny of Tacksmen'—or a Grasping Duke?

Culloden may have been justified in speaking of 'the tyranny of tacksmen' in 1737. He was capable of observing the poverty of the mass of tenants and the inadequacy of the system of food production. A system which may have given the population certain advantages and safeguards against oppression in the seventeenth century may have ceased to work well in the eighteenth. Indeed there is every sign that the system, as it existed in the annexed districts in the early decades of the eighteenth century, was failing sadly to provide proper safeguards for the welfare of the generality of the population. 'They speak of above one hundred familys that have been reduced to beggary and driven out of the islands within these last seven years' (CCR 1884:390). The Lord President perceived these symptoms of poverty and unrest and assumed that the whole fault lay with the monstrous tacksmen. 'Had the tacksmen been suffered to continue their extortions a few years longer', he wrote in 1737, 'the islands would have been dispeopled' (CCR 1884:391).

On the other hand, he may have hit upon the wrong explanation or a partial explanation to explain the facts which he observed accurately enough. There is at least a strong case for arguing that the distress of tenants in the annexed lands was due not so much to the system of tacksmen as to the pressures which this system was being made to bear in a more commercial age. This case must be more closely examined.

John, 2nd Duke of Argyll, was a man of humane impulses. In theory, at least, he had a strong desire to assist the sub-tenants on his estates. He clearly cast himself in the role of their protector and champion against oppression. Among the sparse instructions that have survived, the following to his senior Chamberlain expresses this attitude: 'You are to enquire into the condition of the sub-tenants of Glenaray and Glenshyra, and particularly to examine what rent each of them pays for his possession to my

tacksmen, and to report at Edinburgh in November what you find, and if they complain of any abuses you are to protect and redress them as far lawfully as you can' (ICP/M—L Instructions for Mr Archibald Campbell, 1729). Stonefield wrote in October 1732 that the Duke 'desired that I go to Morvern to make some settlement between the tacksmen and tennents to prevent oppression or severity by the tacksmen by exorbitant exactions or otherwise. He likewise recommends the procuring tacks to the sub-tennents' (SL 2: 64, 16 Oct. 1732).

In practice, however, the Duke's management had a less beneficent aspect. He caused judicial rentals to be made when tacks expired and new ones were being negotiated—in Morvern and Torosay in 1715, in Tiree in 1727, in Morvern in 1732, to name only some of these occasions. They might have been expected, in this context of humane concern and intervention, occasionally to lead to some downward revision in the rentals. In fact, on each occasion, the immediate result was an increase in the rental, sometimes a large one as in Tiree in 1727 and Morvern in 1732. Inevitably, and as a matter of course, the tacksmen passed the augmentations on to their sub-tenants. In 1732, for example, the intended tacksmen of Morvern successfully protested against an increased tack-duty levied from the previous Martinmas on the grounds that they had had insufficient warning to raise the rent of the sub-tenants for that year (SL 3:6–8, 6 March 1732).

At the judicial enquiry into the rentals of Torosay and Morvern in 1715, numerous tenants, speaking from long personal experience or as sons of former tenants, testified that money rents had never been so high. They were not exaggerating. The combined tack-duties of Mull, Morvern and Tiree climbed from £668 13s. 4d. Sterling in 1703 to about £1,300 in 1736. The rental of Tiree, which stood at £1,565 17s. 4d. Scots (about £130 Sterling) in 1674, had risen to £200 Sterling by 1706 and to £325 by 1727 (ICP/V65 'Memorial by Stonefield concerning Tyree' 1748). These were steep increases, even allowing for more settled conditions and good (though not rising) cattle prices (see graph opp. p. 144), and they affected the tacksmen's tenants immediately and severely.

Rising tack-duties, then, were passed on to the sub-tenants and must have contributed to their plight, producing results which were a flagrant denial of the Duke's proclaimed concern for them. How did this contradiction come about? The 2nd Duke was by no means the first of his line to regard his estates as primarily a source of revenue rather than of manpower. Both his father, the 1st Duke, and his grandfather, the 9th Earl, of Argyll had a distinctly modern approach to land-owning. The rental of the Kintyre estate approximately doubled in the last fifty years of the seventeenth century (McKerral 1948:86). One incident will illustrate with what business acumen affairs were handled. In 1690 the 10th Earl (later 1st Duke) was warned that offers for farms in Kintyre were likely to slump owing to the threatened migration of numbers of tacksmen and tenants across the narrow channel to Northern Ireland. Accompanied by a party of friends, he attended the auction of leases, and with their help succeeded in actually pushing rents

up higher (ICP/M—L 'Particular State of the Lordship of Kintyre', n.d.) A Whig outlook combined with their familiarity with English land-owning attitudes and practices doubtless suggested to the earls this new kind of commercial estate management,[14] whilst a steady policy of aggrandisement and princely spending rendered it necessary.

Through the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century the family of Argyll carried a load of inherited debt which was at once a symptom and a cause of their clamant financial needs. The 9th Earl, though restored to his family's estates in 1663, found revenue from his Scottish estates almost equalled by charges against it, the chief being debts of over a million merks (ICP/V62 'Private Accounts Estate'). The 2nd Duke succeeded to a family tradition grown already somewhat alien from their Highland background and to a family estate deeply in debt. His distant upbringing and education had given him the tastes of a great aristocrat, little of the Highland chief's warm regard for his clan. With a large slice of the revenues of his Scottish estates assigned to creditors, including the whole of the tack-duties of Mull, Morvern and Tiree,[15] it could have been predicted that heavier demands would soon be made on his tacksmen. Growing power and fortune increased rather than diminished the Duke's expenses—houses and improvements, new estates in England and Scotland, and all the cost of maintaining the style required of a grandee in that opulent age.

The Duke's urgent demands for remittances from his Scottish lands are mirrored in the letters of his Chamberlains and in instructions to these officials. 'His Grace's occasion for money is so pressing', ran an instruction from the Duke's Commissioners to the Chamberlain of Argyll in 1705, 'that there is a necessity to use the outmost diligence against those lyable in payment without exception' (ICP*/87 'Instructions to the Chamberlane of Argyll', 1705). Fear of disappointing the Duke was enough to throw the Chamberlain into furious activity. James Campbell of Stonefield wrote, panic-stricken, to his deputy in Kintyre, 4 March 1728, that the Duke 'expects at least £4,000 Sterling, and if you doe not more than you mention there is no way for getting it in this place. I hope you will be so wise as to spare nobody upon any account whatsomever, otherwise your credit and mine is at stake, so for God's sake bestirr yourself to purpose as you wish well to your own interest and that of, Dear Sir, your ser^{t}., James Campbell. P.S. . . . for God's sake haste in the rent' (SL 1:43–4).

There is little in the correspondence of the Chamberlain or elsewhere to lead one to think that positive and far-sighted ideas of estate management engaged the attention of the 2nd Duke, much, on the other hand, to indicate that revenue was a constant pre-occupation and that remoter goals were ordinarily subordinated to this. In so far as the Argyll estates remained solvent and reasonably well managed the credit is probably not a little due to the good sense of the trustees who administered the Scottish estates in his earlier years and to the experience and moderation of the two Campbell of Stonefield brothers, who acted successively as Chamberlain of Argyll under the 2nd Duke.

The steady pressure from above to maximise revenue undoubtedly altered the relationship of the tacksmen both to their kinsmen and to their sub-tenants. Their

traditional role was more and more overshadowed by their role as financial agents of their chief. A significant piece of evidence from 1716 suggests that already the process was far advanced. On the agenda for the meeting of the 2nd Duke's Commissioners in August 1716 the following item occurs: 'That new rentalls be made of Mull, Morvern and Tirrie conform to the report to be made by the Shereff [*viz.* James Campbell. See note 20] and Otter, who deponed the sub-tenants on the verity of their rents according to the Commissioners' order, and that the said lands be sett by way of roup [*i.e.* auction] or otherways as the Commissioners shall think just. It is to be observed that . . . the tacks of Aros and Morinish did expire a year agoe and the tacksmen renunced the same by way of instrument and they now design to compt as factors and not as tacksmen, which the Commissioners are to consider' (ICP* 191 'State of the Duke of Argyle's Affaires' Aug. 1716).

Although in the event the proposal that the tacksmen of these districts of Mull should become simply officials of the Duke was not accepted, the fact that it should have been made is an indication that some tacksmen had come to conceive of themselves as more closely related to the Duke's administration than to the populations whom they controlled. The suggestion that tacks might be open to offers is also very significant. Clan chieftainries were not wont to be offered for sale in this fashion in the Highlands. The Duke's tacksmen in fact were rapidly being transformed into a quite new kind of creature. Tacksmen who had bid high for their tacks were unlikely to be capable of discharging the responsibilities formerly expected of local chieftains, but would have to recoup themselves at the natives' expense.

There seems little room for doubt, though, that the *fons et origo* of the new kind of tacksmen is to be sought in the highly commercial policies of the 2nd Duke, which had already resulted in Kintyre in the supersession of the existing tacksmen by the sub-tacksmen in 1710.[16] If the tacksmen were indeed the pincers, as Culloden alleged, then the Duke was undoubtedly the hammer, and his strokes had not been light.

As custom broke down as a regulator of the social body, sub-tenants might find themselves subject to unusual and unfair burdens. Thus, in 1706, the bailie of Tiree, in a memorial to the Duke's managers, recalled 'that when in Edinburgh in Summer last I gave in a representation for the inhabitants of Tirie anent a decreet obtained against them by Donald Campbell for their herezelds, which they would be pleased to consider, for the tenants cannot be obliged to pay herezelds to the Duke of Argyll but only to the tacksman, who has been in constant use to uplift the same, and the tacksman is only lyable for his own herezeld when it falls due, which is and has been the constant practise of the shyre past memory of man. So it's hoped the manadgers will not ordain the tenants to make double payment but may ordain the said Donald Campbell to discharge them for the forsaid decreet' (ICP/V 65 'Memoriall for the Manadgers of the Duke of Argyle's Estate' 1706).

Thus the situation in the insular districts in the early decades of the eighteenth century was one of great confusion and contradiction. It was a situation that was to become

familiar later in all the Highlands and in many other undeveloped areas of the world. The inhabitants, living neither wholly under their traditional clan system nor wholly under a free individualistic, commercial system, were exposed to conflicting demands. The increasing monetary demands of the modern landlord were superimposed on the customary demands of the tacksmen, whilst the tacksmen themselves were driven more and more into a situation where higher rents were all-important. The unfortunate tenants had the worst of both worlds, with neither the economic opportunities of the new nor the safeguards of the old. From the standpoint of a modern man like Duncan Forbes it must have appeared beyond doubt that the time had come to sweep away all the confusions and inconsistencies of the existing system and to introduce a purely commercial landlord-tenant relationship which would open wider opportunities of productivity and trade.

The Immediate Causes of the Tenurial Re-organisation

A silent revolution was thus in progress throughout the 2nd Duke's time, and was transforming land-tenure and the social system well before 1737, but until a comparatively short time before the Lord President denounced the tacksmen, there were few indications that the system as such was to be abolished. Characteristically, the Duke appears to have decided on a total change as a result of developments in the 1730s which convinced him that the tacksmen were of no further use to him and that the sub-tenants could offer higher rents.

It was Morvern, that most turbulent of the annexed territories, that acted as the catalyst.[17] In 1732, following the expiry of Campbell of Craignish's tack, Archibald Campbell of Stonefield was engaged in negotiating new tacks in Morvern. Because of the excessive control that the Camerons enjoyed there, Stonefield proposed to divide the land between the Camerons and the MacLachlans, so that the MacLachlans might be used as a counterpoise to the Camerons, on whom they had previously depended for land. Under this arrangement the Camerons would have to remove from a part of the area which they controlled. Before the tacks were ratified, however, the situation was abruptly changed by the death of Ewan Cameron, one of the intended tacksmen, and by the arrival of a petition, signed by some forty Morvern inhabitants who objected to the granting of the tacks and who offered, in return for leases, a rent equal to that expected of the tacksmen, with a sum sufficient to pay a factor's salary in addition.

These unexpected occurrences may be said to have acted as the train of gunpowder that led straight to the tenurial revolution. Stonefield appears to have first brought forward at this time the idea of changing the existing tenurial system. He adumbrated it in a letter to the Duke on 5 September 1732 (SL 3:28–30). The grant of leases to tenants would, he argued, remove them from their dependence on the tacksmen and transfer their loyalties to the Duke—'It has been the misfortune of this country, and

I might say all the Highlands, that the tenants depended upon other chiefs than the landlord.'[18] There was also the advantage 'that there is a greater reason to expect that the lands will be better improved if sett in smaller parcels'. On the other hand, he pointed out, rents from such tenants would be less reliably paid, and in some areas like Tiree it was out of the question, for this reason, to dismiss the tacksmen.

In October 1732 he visited Mull and Morvern and reported the outcome to the Duke (SL 3:46-50, 20 Dec. 1737). The visit was significant not only because it gave him valuable first-hand information about these districts but also for bringing him into direct personal negotiations with the Morvern tenants whose petition had produced the new situation. The petitioners' grievances against the intended tacksmen he found exaggerated, but he agreed that they had grounds for apprehension if the Camerons received a tack. Moreover, he received information which for the first time established the complicity of the late Glendessary and other Cameron gentry in the theft of Craignish's rents in 1717; an act for which he was now able to demand full compensation. It was a discovery of crucial importance. It outraged Stonefield, who at once dropped all negotiations relating to the proposed tack to the Camerons. He recommended to the Duke that Morvern should be finally reduced to order by the appointment of a Campbell either as factor or as tacksman, and by prosecuting a methodical policy of colonisation by Campbell families and of policing by soldiers of the new Highland Companies, which were known as 'Am Freiceadan Dubh', 'The Black Watch', and were mainly officered in Argyll by Campbells. The choice between the two alternative systems of administration—a Campbell tacksman or a Campbell factor—was resolved by the fact that because of the danger of reprisals, in Stonefield's words, 'no Campbell will take the half of the country', *viz.* the Camerons' half.

The period from late 1732 until the late summer of 1737 was one of waiting and uncertainty. Donald Campbell Yr. of Airds was appointed factor of Morvern in early 1733 but was given no power to grant leases, presumably pending a general settlement of the entire insular districts when the tacksmen's leases in Tiree and Mull should lapse in 1735. He was instructed that the Camerons were to be tolerated, provided they behaved well, and the MacLauchlans were to receive favour (SL 2:75–7, probably Jan. 1733). Airds managed to let the farms advantageously on a year by year basis, but never attempted to collect rents unless accompanied by an armed posse. Cattle houghing and other acts of intimidation continued, and still no Campbell colonists dared to appear.[19]

Step by step a situation had thus developed in Morvern where the system of tacksmen had been in fact suppressed. It had come about, not through any deficiencies or oppressions of the system as such—for if a Campbell had been available, he would have been appointed tacksman—but as a result of a conflict of interests between chief and landlord. The only tacksman to be got represented the interests of Locheil, and had proved himself party to a criminal act against the representative of his landlord, Argyll. Rather than accept a manifest enemy to represent him, Argyll appointed a Campbell factor to collect his revenues and safeguard his interests.

That Argyll could do this, even if with only partial success, was significant of his growing power in a district so much under the influence of the Camerons. For the first time a group of tenants had emerged who were prepared to risk bringing charges against the dominant clan and to offer for farms against the Camerons. This perhaps would not have occurred had they not been emboldened by manifestations of the growing interest of the Government and of Argyll in establishing more effective control in this turbulent area. The work of General Wade, the forming of the Black Watch and Sheriff Campbell's recent tour of enquiry all assisted in this direction—and Campbell diplomacy too played a part by exploiting the rivalries of the clans in Morvern. 'As the possession of McLean's Estate, whereof this is a part, cost your Grace's predecessors no small trouble and expence', thus wrote Stonefield whilst negotiating the Morvern tacks with the Camerons and MacLauchlans in 1732, 'I thought it for your Grace's interest rather to lessen than increase the power of any sett of people, lest some time or other they should become uneasy and render the possession troublesome, and therefore thought it more advisable to divide the country between two clanns, since you have then a probable chance to have one of them always of your side' (SL3:11, n.d. probably Mar. 1732).

Estate Management in a Period of Economic Depression

Stonefield had had considerable influence on the formulation of the new tenurial plans, but it was not to be left to him to carry them through. A latent tension existed between the 2nd Duke and his Chamberlain. In the 'thirties the Duke depended on receiving approximately £4,000 of his Scottish rents and feu-duties in late March and early April each year. Rent increases had evidently already begun to place a considerable strain on the tenants, especially in the islands. Early in 1728 James Campbell of Stonefield reported that the sub-tacksmen of Tiree 'give in a vast account of losses by broken tenants and other damages they sustain . . . more for a year or two than the Duke has sustained in the whole estate these 22 years that I have had the honour to serve him' (SL 1:105–6, 14 Mar. 1728). It was the Chamberlain's task to make the Duke's rents effectual in conditions that were increasingly difficult during the thirties. The Duke, residing at Adderbury in Oxfordshire, was quite incapable of understanding the problem. Being without any intimate knowledge of conditions in the Highlands, he was simply irritated by interruptions or delays in his supplies of money.

The Stonefield brothers, on the other hand, had as Chamberlains of Argyll,[20] a close acquaintance with local conditions and daily experience of the immediate relationship between rents on the one hand and weather, harvests, cattle prices, drovers' failures and a score of other circumstances on the other. Moreover, they had the outlook of small lairds, depending as they did for most of their income on the rent of their lands in the north of Kintyre. Their chief concern as landlords was to realise a regularly-paid revenue, with as little arrears as possible, and they actively practised the article of faith

expressed by Archibald Campbell of Stonefield in a letter to the Duke that 'a sure and well paid rent' was better than 'a high one ill paid' (SL 3:195, 10 May 1737). In their view, the worst eventuality was for a laird to be left with part of his lands untilled and 'waste' through the insolvency of tenants.

From these basic principles it followed, first, that when lands were to be 'set' and agreements made with tenants, all the holdings must be occupied, without any waste land. At each period of letting, the Stonefields showed great anxiety to ensure that all the 'rooms' were taken. If need be tenants in other districts were induced to come.[21] Secondly, it followed that honest and reliable tenants were preferred, though offering a lower rent, to tenants of uncertain credit and character offering more. High offers were treated with extreme reserve and might not be accepted. Finally, it was essential to prevent tenants from becoming insolvent, quitting their holdings and leaving the laird with his rents unpaid. Indulgence in time of need was therefore both wise and necessary. Archibald Campbell was only expressing practical wisdom when in December 1731 he advised the Duke against charging interest on arrears of rent in Kintyre: 'by experience I find in your Grace's affairs as well as in my own little concerns that it is necessary for a landlord to give some indulgence to his tennent according to his circumstances, and I'm afraid there was seldom more occasion for it than will be this year' (SL 3:1, 23 Dec. 1731). Stonefield's outlook and practice were by no means exceptional. During the depression of the seventeen thirties Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy, laird of a Lochfyneside estate, allowed tenants' arrears to run from three or four years before being cleared. It might also be necessary to give a struggling tenant practical assistance.

The Stonefield policy is illustrated by James Campbell's handling of the situation on one of his farms, where two groatland holdings[22] were liable to become waste by tenant failures in November 1728. One groatland was, if possible, he instructed his overseer, to be taken over by the rest of the tenants; 'but whatever you doe you must take care that no more of the lands be waste, even tho some of the rents should be given down [lowered] and that I rather doe by giving it out of my pocket'. The other groatland was likely to become waste by a tenant 'having lost his labouring horses', and in this case Stonefield recommended to his overseer: 'if no better can be done you must provide him in a horse. You very well know he was obliged to labour that ground till Whitsunday if he has anything in the world, and this is no time of year to put off lands, and indeed if you allow them to run away 'twixt terms this way I may have enough of waste lands in a short time' (SL 1:184–4, 8 Nov. 1728).

As Chamberlains of Argyll, both Stonefields attempted to apply these principles of estate management. It was no easy task. Economic conditions in the West Highlands appear to have been generally adverse in the decade preceding the Lord President's visit.[23] Most years saw the Duke's rents collected with difficulty in one district or more generally, arrears commonly high and tenants in frequent distress. Rents had never been higher, but the economy was extremely sluggish, owing, in particular, to the slackening

in the demand for cattle, on which rents almost entirely depended. There was scarcely a year between 1730 and 1740 when low cattle prices were not mentioned, or when, for this or other reasons, farmers and landlords in the West Highlands were not in difficulties. In 1733–4, one of the worst years, the failure of the harvest aggravated the distress. 1735–6 was perhaps the only crop-year when the Chamberlain's task was reasonably easy (SL 3:106, 14 Apr. 1736), but the spring of 1736 carried off many cattle in Kintyre and it was immediately followed by one of the worst years of the decade and the beginning of an emigration movement from that district which greatly alarmed the Chamberlain (SL 3:170, 19 Feb. 1737).

The Chamberlain was in the unenviable position of having to press tenants for higher rents in a period of severe economic depression. He did so with as much consideration as possible and only as a last resort adopted the self-defeating policy of impounding the stock of tenants in arrears. In his letters to the Duke, Archibald Campbell had frequently to excuse the state of the remittances, as, for example, in March 1734 when he wrote to the Duke: 'As the expence of the work[24] is not now so heavy as in former years, His Grace might have expected a greater remittance at this time, but the price of cattle has been so low that the returns have been small and late in coming to us. It is computed that in Scotland the price of cattle last year has fallen a crown a head. In Tiree and Morvern there is yet no rent come up. From the latter I expect to have some soon. Those countreys and Mull have not only suffered by the low price of cattle but likewise in their corns by the long drought last summer and the great shake in harvest, and they and other parts of the country are in a very lamentable condition at present by the death of their cattle, which they ascribe to the great rains that fell this Winter and yet continue' (SL 3:74–6, 21 Mar. 1734). By mid-April 1734 he had sent only £3,000 to the Duke.

The rentals of the insular districts were due to be settled in 1735, when the tacks of Mull and Tiree expired, but Culloden postponed the matter, probably hoping for an improvement in general conditions, which would produce better offers of rent. Although uncertainty continued, the shape of the future was becoming clearer. The tacksmen appear to have accepted the non-renewal of their tacks with reasonably good grace and to have complied with a request from Culloden to transmit to the Chamberlain, in Culloden's words, 'exact rentalls of the districts that fall within their severall collections, which may be a rule to the factor to be employed, together with what they honestly take to be the rent of their respective possessions in which they are to be continued'. He went on: 'That will I think oblige the Duke, it will be a rule for the immediate collection and will give light to the Duke or me, or any other person that may go to the spot to set the lands next year' (CP 2968:31, 14 Oct. 1736).

To lighten the Chamberlain's task, Culloden arranged for the appointment of a factor for Tiree and Mull in October 1736 (CP 2968:31–3). The person chosen was Archibald Campbell of Ballimore, a brother of Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell and a kinsman of Stonefield. He had previously been one of the tacksmen of Mull and had

willingly resigned his tack when informed of the Duke's intentions. His having been a tacksman in fact commended him to Culloden since, as the latter wrote to the Duke, 'this man was perfectly acquainted with the condition of the estate and therefore able to controul the rentalls which the other tacksmen may offer if fallacious' (CP 2986:32, 16 Oct. 1736).

Ballimore began his rent collection in early February 1737, but made painfully slow progress because of the low price of cattle and the general poverty of these districts. In a report presented to Culloden in spring 1737, he detailed the problems facing him and offered certain advice. Tenants, he explained, in their anxiety to get land would make extravagant offers of rent which they could never pay. In Tiree, for example, the tenants had offered him sums totalling more than £400 Sterling, a large amount since this did not include the two ends of Coll. With cattle markets so depressed, and tenants so wholly dependent on them, he urged that in the future set of the islands, rents should be fixed at a moderate level, remarking: 'in my opinion if Tirrie, secluding the two ends of Coll, exceed much four hundred pounds sterling rent for some years, the tennants will not live happily'. He explained further that the tacksmen were at an advantage in collecting rents, since they could accept linen cloth and other produce or take young cattle which could be grazed for a year or two and then sold (CP 2970:183-6).

Tenurial change had thus become virtually certain some months before the Lord President paid his visit to the West. His report in 1737 strangely ignored the important preliminaries that had already taken place, including the receiving of offers from bodies of tenants (for offers were coming in from tenants in Morvern as well as Tiree) and the appointment of factors (SL 3:146–51, 3 Dec. 1736; 191–5, 10 May 1737). Yet if Culloden had not made his visit, it seems certain that Stonefield would have granted leases to a larger body of tenants in all districts. That it was Culloden and not Stonefield who in the event carried out the tenurial reorganisation was the result of a widening of the gap between the Duke and his Chamberlain.

The Duke and Chamberlain in Disagreement

In the first half of 1737 it became clear that the Duke had become totally dissatisfied with the management of his rents and believed that the fault lay not in the condition of the tenants but in the misconduct of his officials and tacksmen. A series of letters from the Chamberlain in the early months of 1737 spoke of devasting mortality among the cattle in Mull and Morvern, of impoverished tenants in the insular districts, and of a new and marked decline in Kintyre, where an alarming interest in emigration had suddenly developed. 'There is a great change in that good country within these two years', he wrote to the Duke on May 10th, and to explain why he was able to remit only £3,700, he claimed that rents were 'much worse than ever I knew them'. Evidently to rebut the charges that had been made, he went on, 'I can venture to say your case is not singular, and that it is not for want of diligence in the persons I employ to collect

the rents, but real want of money in the country. The factor of Morvern complains that the tenants are much impoverished there this year by the death of cattle in that country and that Mull has had the same fate, where as many are swept off as was in Kintyre last year. He likeways observes that it is a loss both to your Grace and the tenants in that country that they are so long in an uncertain state without leases and that it must affect the payment of rents till once they are settled' (SL 3:194, 10 May 1737).

The Chamberlain then made a proposal that was to be of great significance. 'If the Lord Advocat were to make a tour to those countreys as he once proposed, he might enquire into the circumstances of the tenants and the manner of payment of rents, discover the true cause of slow payments, settle with the tenants for new leases and give directions for the most prudent and speedy methods of collecting the rents.' He adds the wise counsel, 'That a sure and well paid rent is preferable to a high one ill paid must be allowed and deserves to be adverted to when these countreys are lett in lease' (SL 3: 193–5, 10 May 1737). Three weeks later, with only £258 received from Mull and Tiree, and £272 from Morvern, Stonefield defended the factor's zeal: 'I am perfectly persuaded if Airds had not exerted himself and had not, with some address, encouraged drovers to buy the tenants' cattle, it would not have been in his power to remit so much this year. I believe it will give him greater trouble that his Grace is not satisfyd with his management than that he should be discharged' (SL 3:188, 3 June 1737).

His letter of 22 June is a reasoned statement of the causes of the general economic depression, as he understood them, with a series of comments on the prospects of improving the rents in each of the insular districts. In view of later events, his remarks are of unusual importance, for he was to prove vindicated in almost every detail. Conditions were bad on the mainland as well as in the remoter areas. 'Since ever I had occasion to know anything of the business of this country there were always before this time of year eight hundred or a thousand cattle sold off from Kintyre to people from the Low Country, Galloway or our dealers here. This summer there is not a man come to the country to buy one head.'[25] The crisis moreover was common to all areas and all estates: 'The circumstances of tenants in this shire is very much changed for the worse within these two or three years. This I have access to know not only from the payments by his Grace's tenants, who are still in a better condition than the tenants of other heritors, except those in the islands, but likeways from the collection of cess[26] and from my own small concerns where I sensibly feel it, and in short in the course of all payments whatsomever.'

In Morvern, rents could not be raised any more, he argued, for he himself had augmented them considerably in 1732, and since then cattle prices had declined and the lead-mine, which 'made a circulation of money', had closed down.[27]. 'As for Mull, if it be lett at the rent the under-tennents paid, I'm afraid it will be too high and that the payments may not be regular since substantial tenants cannot be got to take it at that rate, the consequence of which is that the tenants will not be able to stand above a year

or two, and then several parts of it will be to lett again. . . .' Tiree was the greatest problem of all. 'What to say of Tiry I cannot tell. Most of the people are, and I believe ever were miserably poor since the first settlement of people there. What will it signify to give leases to people that will not be able to hold them above a year? Many of them do not pay above twenty merks Scots of rent, and several only ten merks, and how a family can be subsisted upon such a small proportion of land without any trade and pay the rent is not easy to conceive, nor is it possible to get good tenants to go and settle in that country without encouragement' (SL 3:202–5, 22 June 1737).

Stonefield evidently did not despair of influencing the settlement of these districts, for he wrote: 'These things I thought it my duty to take notice of that his Grace might have them in view when he gives directions for setting the lands.' And on the eve of the departure of the Lord President, he wrote to the Duke's secretary, reinforcing his views, urging the need for moderation in the rents and caution in granting leases. They should be given, he urged, only to gentlemen and men of substance—'By gentlemen I do not mean lairds or landed men but persons having a stock of two, three or five hundred pound, for such are in these countreys so designed.' By leasing to gentlemen as much land as they could occupy with their own stock, and permitting sub-tenancy, he saw the best prospect of improving the rents. On this footing, he envisaged Tiree being leased to ten or twelve tenants, some of whom would be non-resident or, better still, to one tacksman (SL 3:210–13, 4 Aug. 1737).

Stonefield's credit had fallen low with the Duke and his advice had ceased to carry much weight. Nevertheless, his statements on the economic situation in the 'thirties, and in particular the serious effects which he attributed to low cattle prices, are consistent and well supported. Reports by Ballimore and others authenticate what Stonefield said and show that he was not simply making excuses for bad management. Cattle were, after all, the lynch-pin of the Highland economy. There was usually little else to pay the rents (Walker 1812 Vol. 2:46), and a sharp fall in price or a severe winter that swept off large numbers of cattle could be disastrous to tenants—and lairds.

Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy (1693–1790), who dealt extensively in cattle at certain periods and who was an intimate of Stonefield's, recorded in his rent-books the prices which he allowed tenants for cattle given to him in payment of rents.[28] Whilst not providing a fully reliable index for cattle prices in this period—for the numbers bought vary from year to year from a handful to a score or more—Knockbuy's accounts do give a valuable guide to the movement of cattle prices in the West Highlands from 1728 to 1786. So far as they go, they completely substantiate the Chamberlain's reports. They show that cattle prices, though generally rising throughout the century, did so in a succession of waves with marked crests and troughs, and that the deepest trough did in fact occur between 1730 and 1740, and extended over most of these years (see Appendix and graph opp. p. 144).

Tenants' cows bought by Knockbuy averaged £15 17s. Scots in the three year period 1729, 1730 and 1731, but in the eight years that followed (1732–9) they sank to

an average of £13 3s. then climbed again to an average of £17 19s. in the ten-year period 1740–9. Bullock prices are a less useful guide, for the reasons given in the Appendix, but they indicate a similar pattern, with the 'thirties forming a trough between periods of fairly high prices (KP/R). This pattern is borne out convincingly by the prices paid by the Navy Victualling Board. Buying scores of cattle every week for barrelling, the yards were normally paying, during the first three decades of the century, between 20s. and 25s. per hundred-weight. Prices dropped abruptly in the 'thirties and remained low, at an average of 16s., until 1740, when they recovered. For three years running, prices had fluctuated around 13s. 6d., their lowest point of the century: precisely at that crucial period for the insular districts, 1735–7 (see Appendix, and graph; Beveridge 1939:568–71).

Scotland thus did not by any means wholly escape the agricultural depression that engulfed much of England in the period 1730–50 (Mingay 1955–6; Chambers and Mingay 1966:40–2). Scotland's corn prices, in contrast to England's, remained steady (Mitchison 1965), but as a mainly pastoral country she would be seriously and generally affected by the depression of cattle markets in the 'thirties; how seriously in the West Highlands will have already become apparent.

The Lord President's Expedition and the New Rental

The expedition started from the home of Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell at the end of the first week of August. The party, consisting of the Lord President, Sir Duncan Campbell, Stonefield, a number of Argyll lairds and the Duke's Edinburgh lawyer, Ronald Dunbar, was accommodated in the Duke's capacious barge, along with a crew of twelve or thirteen men, 'twenty bolls [of meal] and some barrells of sea bisket, a little quantity of flour, some gallons of whiskie and some ship's beer', ordered by the Chamberlain before she sailed from the Clyde. Culloden himself, with his usual foresight, brought an additional supply of fourteen dozen bottles of wine to cheer the long and arduous weeks ahead (SL 3:207–9, 24 July 1737; and 230–2, 16 Dec. 1737). Gentlemen came to pay their respects to the Lord President and his company wherever they landed and there would be much conviviality. With all its good cheer, however, this was a portentous visit, comparable in its ultimate significance for the West Highlands with the tour of Bishop Andrew Knox in 1609 to impose Lowland ways on the western chiefs. Here, in closest juxtaposition, facing each other across an unseen, unbridged abyss, were the representatives of a highly traditional military society and the redoubtable leader of the new commercial Scotland.

Stonefield was at pains to inform Culloden about all that related to the rents and conditions in these districts (SL 3:216, Stonefield to the Duke, 27 Sept. 1737). No man could have done more than Stonefield to set guide-lines for this crucial reorganisation. The Lord President appears to have respected his views in leasing the bulk of the land to 'men of substance', but in two important respects this *legatus a latere* chose to over-ride

the Chamberlain's advice. In the first place, he encouraged unrestricted competitive bidding for the leases of farms and so realised a considerable augmentation in the rental. In the second place he created a multitude of small joint lease-holders from the body of former sub-tenants and common tenants.

Culloden's report, made to the Duke after the expedition was over, is almost the only source of information about the progress of the tour (CCR 1884:380–94). In this he relates how he summoned the tenants together, first those of Mull and Morvern, then those of Tiree, 'and acquainted them with your Grace's favourable intention of delivering them from the tyranny of taxmen [*sic*], of freeing them from the oppression of services and herezelds, and of incouraging them to improve their farms by giving them a sort of property in their grounds for 19 years by lease, if they showed themselves worthy of the intended favour by offering frankly for their farms such rent as honestly and fairly they could bear.'

Culloden was surprised and offended when the inhabitants appeared to show no interest in the Duke's 'favour', and concluded that it was 'the effect of a combination' carefully prepared by the tacksmen and their kinsmen, the gentlemen. Some sort of tacit agreement not to bid up the rents there probably was, though not necessarily for the sinister reasons that he supposed. With the help of Campbell of Lochnell's brothers, Ardslignish and Ballimore, he managed to coax or threaten the inhabitants to begin to bid. Competition once started became keen and what Stonefield had most dreaded—a considerable addition to the rental—was realised. The rental of Tiree and the two ends of Coll was raised to £533 8s. (at the time of making his report, Culloden believed that £570 would be realised), compared with the old tack-duty of £325 (CCR 1884: 390; ICP/M—Ac). The rental of Mull was raised to £794, compared with £500 from the tacksmen,[29] and that of Morvern remained at £467 as it had been since it ceased being in tack, compared with £222 from the tacksmen prior to 1732 (CCR 1884:390–1). The rental for the insular districts was thus 39 per cent above that of 1735 (*viz.* from £1,292 to £1,794) but the increase was rather over 60 per cent for Mull and Tiree. The actual increase to the tenants was smaller, since they had formerly paid the tacksmen a surplus; in Tiree, for example, it meant an actual increase of 26 per cent to the tenants.

The Lord President felt constrained to excuse his failing to produce a larger increase, quite unnecessarily for the Duke's reply (CP 2968:64) expressed the greatest satisfaction. 'I am sorry my endeavours have not answered your expectations or my wishes, but I am confident your Grace will not suspect the disappointment is owing to any want of care or patience in me. I have assigned, in the course of my narration, the true causes—the miserable poverty of the people, proceeding from the oppression of their late taxmasters, the badness of the seasons for some years and the sensible decay in the demand for cattle' (CCR 1884:391). In due course, as positive improvement got under way, the Duke would reap a richer harvest: 'Another advantage this expedition has brought you is that the view I have had of the grounds, and the knowledge I have gained of the condition and manners of the people may prevent future impositions, and put your

Grace in a method of improving your estate, by bettering the condition of your tennents, which in a small time will bring you a secure rent, and put it in the way of yielding considerable augmentation, if or when a new set happens to be made' (CCR 1884:391). His mood was one of optimism and sober satisfaction. 'Tho' your Grace's expectations or mine may not be answered as to the improvement of the rent, yet in this I have satisfaction, and it may be some to you, that the method you have taken has prevented the totall ruin of these islands and the absolute loss of the whole rent in time coming to your Grace. Had the taxmen [*sic*] been suffered to continue their extortions a few years longer, the islands would have been dispeopled, and you must have been contented with no rent, or with such rent as these harpies should be graciously pleased to allow you . . .' (CCR 1884:391).

This, then, was only the preliminary stage to a great expansion of the revenue and of productivity; this was the convalescence after a near-mortal disease, in which the tenants must be 'tenderly dealt with'.

The Tenurial Reorganisation: Social, Economic and Political Aspects

The immediate consequence of the tenurial reorganisation was that the great tacksmen finally lost their control of patronage in land in the Duke's insular estates, and the powers of bailiary and other rights associated with it. In their place a large body of tenants emerged throughout these districts from the status of sub-tacksmen and sub-tenants.[30] Their leases guaranteed them secure and undisturbed occupation of their land, usually for nineteen years, provided that they kept the conditions of their leases. Their rents were payable in money, except for certain victual rents, and they were released (to quote the wording of the Mull leases) from 'all herezalds, caswaltys, and other prestations and services whatsomever . . . except the services of tennants for repairing harbours, mending highways or makeing or repairing miln leads for the general benefit of the island'.

On the face of it, these were immense advantages which could not but elevate the status and material conditions of the mass of the new tenants. They were now free to pursue their own interests, unimpeded by the demands of a tacksman, and since subletting was specifically forbidden in all the leases the whole elaborate pyramid of subordinate relationships, based on land, which linked together the various classes of society and culminated in the tacksman, would presumably disappear. Culloden expected that a benevolent landlord would bring the lessons of advancing agricultural knowledge within the reach of tenants, and as an earnest of this gave a lease of the farm of Ruaig in Tiree on advantageous terms to a Glasgow merchant born in that island, on condition that he introduced improved methods of farming (ICP/M—Ac 1743; V65 various papers). Culloden envisaged that as the experiments proved profitable and successful they would be adopted by neighbouring tenants, so raising the general standard of agriculture in Tiree and producing higher rents for the landlord.

To the 8th Duke, writing as the apologist of nineteenth-century landlordism in the high noon of the Victorian age, the events of 1737 represented a great leap forward, a manifestation of benevolent landlordism apparently justifying his assertion that in this island 'every single step towards improvement that has taken place during the last 150 years has been taken by the Proprietor and not by the people' (Argyll 1887:271). For any progress to be possible, he argued, the landlord had first to resume the powers over his lands and tenants that had been 'delegated to men whose own possession was not permanent, and whose interests were therefore not identified with the growing wealth and permanent prosperity of the people' (Argyll 1887:257). Having regained control over the land by dismissing the tacksmen, he was free to allocate it in such a way that tenants, enjoying modern conditions of security and freedom, would collaborate eagerly with the landlord in the fullest exploitation of the land and its resources. It is the contention of the 8th Duke that progress proceeded uninterrupted from this point, borne on the willing shoulders of a secure and liberated tenantry.

Whether this claim will prove well-founded or not, the 8th Duke rightly saw 1737 as a watershed in the history of these districts, indeed in the evolution of the Highland region in general. More than half a century of growing commercialism in the management of the Argyll estates lay behind it (and this the 8th Duke overlooked), so that the events of 1737 came less as a revolution than as a formalisation of practices in which the estate had already some experience. What was important was that in the leases granted by Culloden a new orthodoxy was announced, new standards of value were given the official seal, and a new framework of relationships, designed to be more favourable than the traditional system to economic development, was created.

The assumption on which the new system was based was that land should produce a revenue for the landlord like any other capital asset and that it should therefore be allocated, not as a token of kinship, as a reward for allegiance or as a means of maintaining a following, but in response to the operation of competitive bidding. It appeared fair that the value of land should be settled by the impersonal arbitration of the open auction. The implications of this new orthodoxy for the whole Highlands were far-reaching. Ultimately, as it gained ground, it would change the form of society and bring the whole region into the closest dependence on the industrial western world. As a direct consequence of the application of this commercial principle, classes of society would be transformed, whole populations would move and the political and military ebullience of the Highlands would become a thing of the past.

More immediately, it threatened the privileged position of the Campbell colonists and to some extent placed them at the mercy of the clans whom they had ousted and who now enjoyed equal opportunities of acquiring farm leases in open auction. A number of the former tenants recovered land, whilst some of the colonist families, like the Campbells of Auchinard on Iona, lost their holdings. In general the colonists retained their dominant position, but their dominance was due to their competitive strength and not to their name. It was to say the least politically hazardous to weaken

the morale of the clan Campbell in the insular districts at a period when Jacobitism, drawing on the genius of clanship for creating a devoted following, was becoming once again an active force. The Duke appeared to be denying himself the strongest weapon in his armoury and to be setting at risk the delicate political balance of the West Highlands.

Whilst accepting the great significance of 1737 as a watershed in the development of the West Highlands, one must enter a caveat. Attitudes and sentiments change slowly in the Highland region; there is an immense conservativism constantly moderating the forces of change and absorbing innovations into a traditional way of life. The announcement of a reform does not imply complete and immediate change in society; simply an attempt to influence society, which may be more or less effective. In general the 8th Duke appears in his writings to exaggerate the pace of social change and to underrate the forces making for continuity. It is important to correct this imbalance, and to emphasise that social changes, though they were far-reaching, took place within a society whose nature it was to shape the unfamiliar into familiar forms. Despite the shattering events that overtook the Highlands in the eighteenth century, it is possible to see organic links between the aristocratic society of the late seventeenth century and the crofter world of the early nineteenth century.

The destruction of the tacksmen's enormous holdings and the grant of leases did not totally revolutionise the social and economic bases of life. It did not, for example, radically alter the distribution of wealth in the insular districts, and so left unaffected much of the hierarchic social structure. Thus about a quarter of the new leaseholders were of the *daoine uaisle*, gentry of the clan Campbell or some other clan. This minority of tenants in fact occupied three-quarters of the total land in the Duke's insular estates. Competition had produced some changes in the occupying families, but by and large the resident tenants had succeeded in retaining their farms, though at much higher rents. The holdings of the large tenants were no longer the vast districts of the tacksmen, but they corresponded closely with those of the sub-tacksmen and ranged mostly between one and four extensive farms. In the first decades of the eighteenth century the Ross of Mull had been in tack to Archibald Campbell and Donald Campbell, belonging respectively to the closely related branches of Crackaig and Scammadill, who were also closely linked with the Campbells of Clenamacrie. After the tenurial reorganisation, six farms in the Ross district were occupied by small tenants (five of them probably on a lease), three were in the hands of single tenants named MacLean, and the remaining thirteen were in the occupation of large Campbell tenants. The Crackaig branch held three farms; the Scammadill branch four; and the Clenamacrie branch six (ICP/M—R 1742).

Such families, though deprived of the powers of tacksmen, remained leaders of local society, enjoying economic power and social eminence. Their households were large, with numerous men- and maid-servants, and formed the nucleus of busy rural communities of agriculturalists and rural craftsmen (Cregeen 1964: xxiv-xxv). This

patriarchal order had by no means passed away when Johnson travelled in the Hebrides in 1773. Sub-tenancy was formally prohibited under the conditions of Culloden's leases, but because of the chronic shortage of specie it must have survived in some form in such rural communities. In practice it was virtually impossible to distinguish between a sub-tenant paying rent for his land in labour services and a married servant receiving part of his wages in a portion of arable ground and grazing rights for a few beasts.

The hierarchic structure of Highland society thus largely survived the tenurial re-organisation. Former tacksmen and their kinsmen maintained their social pre-eminence and much of their control over the people, and to a considerable extent succeeded in holding on to the lion's share of the land. Members of this class filled the appointments of district factors newly created to carry out duties formerly discharged by the tacksmen. The essential change was less in personnel than in function. The large tenants owed their position not to their name and ancestry but to their competitive strength and economic resources, and they could hope to survive only by enabling the Duke to gain the maximum return from his estates in terms not of fighting men but of money rents.[31]

One of the most significant innovations introduced by Culloden was the grant of leases to small tenants occupying a fractional share of a large farm. 'Common tenants' accounted for about three-quarters of the new leaseholders. The 8th Duke claimed the creation of this new class of petty leaseholders as one of the most significant achievements in the social development of the West Highlands. Once again he overlooks the continuities and presents too rosy a view. Their economic status was basically unchanged by their possession of leases. They were allocated no more than a quarter of the total land available. In certain important respects they were positively handicapped by a system which translated payments in labour or kind, both reasonably available, into cash, which was scarce. Former sub-tenants were deprived moreover of supplies of working capital and animals which their masters had provided under steelbow arrangements. The leases forbade the sub-letting of land and insisted on tenants grazing only their own stock. Thus, from an economic position that in some respects was weaker than before, small tenants were undertaking more exacting commitments, especially in the matter of rents.

What the 8th Duke dismissed as 'some little immediate increase of rent' (Argyll 1887:259) amounted, as has been shown above, to a general increase of 40 per cent, and, for Mull and Tiree, an increase of 60 per cent over the 1735 level. Such an augmentation would annex not only all the tacksmen's profit but a large increment besides, which could only come out of the tenants' pockets. If the tacksmen had been avaricious tyrants, how then could the Lord President justify a level of rents substantially above that required by the tacksmen, especially in view of the Chamberlain's warnings and in a period of profound economic depression?

Culloden's report gives no satisfactory answer to this question, for the expansion of production which he envisaged was necessarily a long-term project whose success was

in doubt. Instead he brought unsupported charges against the factors' management and made intemperate accusations against the tacksmen which contrast with Stonefield's reasoned statements about economic conditions. Unfortunately, Culloden's report was more acceptable to the Duke, who welcomed this evidence that he had been cheated of his proper rents by the mismanagement of his servants and representatives. The tacksmen were thus made the scapegoats for all the evils of the times and the way was prepared for an intensification of the very measures which had helped to impoverish the Duke's insular tenants. Culloden's report is to be taken, not as a dispassionate survey of conditions but as a brilliant piece of special pleading. It was the kind of report to please the Duke, but it does more credit to Culloden the Lord Advocate than Culloden the Lord President, and it was in the end a great disservice to the Duke.

Stonefield expressed himself on the whole subject with quiet sceptisicm in a letter to the Duke written shortly after the expedition was over: 'The rents are augmented beyond anyone's expectations. Whether that augmentation will stand I cannot take upon me to determine. I heartily wish they may but shrewdly dread the contrary, especially if the seasons do not turn out better than they have for some years past. I now observe that there is no great difficulty to raise the rents of any countrey, expecially islands, as high as one has a mind. Poor people will keep their land at any rate [*i.e.* at any cost] as long as they can, and will rather beg in the land of their nativity than live tollerably elsewhere.' Offers, however, were no sure guide to what tenants could pay, 'for once a competition of bidding for lands happens, people will sometimes exceed the just value, so that upon the whole there is yet no certain evidence that this settlement with the tenants will prove effectuall, nor can there be till once they come to pay the augmented rents' (SL 3:215–18, 27 Sept. 1737).

Disaster Threatens the New System

It was perhaps not the most favourable period for innovations. Political instability, always present in the west, broke into open war in 1745. The islands were several times visited by disastrous seasons in the 'forties. General economic conditions, on the other hand, were vastly better than in the 'thirties and cattle prices were back to their earlier buoyancy. For the remarkable plight of the insular districts during the 'forties one must look as much or more to the human errors embodied in the new tenurial system as to political or climatic vicissitudes. The full extent of it is revealed in detail in factors' reports submitted to the second Duke's successor in 1747 and 1748. The intervening stages are not so clearly recorded, for the Stonefield letterbooks end in 1738, but estate accounts and occasional letters, memorials and reports indicate the main features.

The Duke's mood of satisfaction changed fairly rapidly into disenchantment. He had replied to Culloden's report in delighted terms (9 Oct. 1737): 'I am very far from not having my expectations answered; for, upon my word, I took it for granted, from the

Sheriff's way of stating the affairs of that country, that things would turn out as you found them; and believe me, I think myself well off on the foot that you have put them, and I am fully persuaded, if you had not given yourself the trouble you have done, some gentlemen had brought about their ends whose duty it was to serve me better. When you have time, my curiosity makes me wish to know your observations on Teree. I have strange notions of that island' (CP 2968:64).

Further details about the condition of Tiree effectively discouraged the Duke's curiosity. He wrote to Culloden in a more sober mood on 25 March 1738: 'I have received your letter with your state of the island of Tyrie, by which I find a young man who could hope for thanks from those who were to succeed him might take advantage of that place. You know I am not in that state; but however I am not the less obliged to you for your constant concern and anxious care for everything that in any degree relates to my interest or welfare' (Duff 1815: CLXXXVI). A commission in the Blues for Culloden's son expressed the Duke's gratitude to a loyal servant but for Culloden's brain-child there was clearly to be no endowment from the Duke. The more positive aspects of Culloden's new programme would be quietly forgotten. They would be revived later under successors more actively committed to improvement.

Intractable difficulties were early in appearing. Numbers of tenants in Mull and Tiree had 'resiled' from their leases (that is, had refused to conclude the agreements by signing them) and, on a technicality, could not be legally coerced (CP 2970:173-7). Arrears were accumulating, especially in Tiree. One of the Duke's advisers wrote to him early in 1738: 'The arrear now due from that country is very great. If exacted vigorously it's probable the country would be laid waste. Every small tenant cannot be at the expense of coming into the continent in order to turn his effects into money' (*loc. cit.*). The same official warned the Duke that punctual rents could never be expected from the island until industry and improved agriculture were introduced.[32]

Petitions coming in from the islands at this time suggest that the failure of the new system to produce either revenue or contented tenants was due not only to high rents but to the lack of flexibility in the method of collecting them. One such petition was presented (evidently in 1738) by a number of substantial tenants in Mull and Iona. It runs:

> The petition of your submissive and obedient tennants in the Isle of Mull to His Grace the the Duke of Argyll.
>
> Humbly sheweth
>
> That we having made proposals for the lands that we now possess [*i.e.* occupy] are willing to adhere to the same, but that we dread very much the dangerous consequence of binding ourselves to pay our rents compleatly at Martinmass term by reason that our cowes and horses nowadays gives little or no price att all and that a great many among us may use severall shifts to get penies of money betwixt Martinmass and Whitsunday that they cannot do before Martinmas and therefore we begg that your Grace would consider our circumstances so far as if necessity did oblidge us to come short in making compleat

payment at the Martinmas that the remainder may be taken from us in money at the Whit-sunday thereafter.

May it therefore please your Grace to grant us our petition and your petitioners shall ever pray . . . (CP 2970:182).

A petition presented to Culloden by a group consisting mainly of small tenants in Mornish in Mull (CP 2970:177) complained that the factor was rigorously exacting interest on rents unpaid at Martinmas (as he was entitled to do under the terms of the tacks) and was forcing them to sell their cattle to him below the price offered them by drovers. For these reasons they declared: 'We shall never sign our tacks on stamped paper untill we have reason to believe that we shall not be dealt with after this manner for the future.' These and similar reasons, all reflecting a severely legalistic approach, caused the negotiations for many of the new tacks to break down at the final stage.

Ballimore, factor of Mull and Tiree, appears to have managed his districts in a somewhat ruthless manner. Airds, on the other hand, was restrained by more tender sensibilities in dealing with the Morvern tenants. In April 1738 he offered his resignation. Stonefield explained the reasons to the Duke: 'He said if he continued in his office he must either be the executioner of the people or disoblige his constituents, and that he would chuse rather to demit than do either' (SL 3:246, 12 Apr. 1738). He was, however, evidently persuaded to continue.

By the summer of 1739 the Duke's high hopes of better rents had totally faded. Even Kintyre was disappointing him. Mull and Tiree were in deep arrears and had, in fact, yielded none of the rents due at Martinmas 1738. The Duke wrote to Culloden on 14 July, deeply dejected. 'I have written to the Sheriff by this post and expressed some disgust at the treatment I meet with in the affair of payments. . . . He seems not to be displeased that Ballimore behaves so extravagantly ill as he does. I confess I did not think that man would have given the Sheriff such subject of triumph. I end my dissertation on my private affairs with telling you that what I would faine obtain is to know what I can receive and when I can receive it. I will rather lessen my rent-roll than not be able to know what I have to depend on from your parts of the world' (CP 2968:117). Thus already within two years of the great reorganisation, Stonefield's views were beginning to be vindicated and the Lord President's policies were losing the Duke's confidence. Nevertheless, so long as Culloden remained his principal adviser, there was no change in policy.

A list of annual revenue received by the factor of Mull and Tiree from 1735 to 1743 and presented in a memorial by the Deputy Chamberlain in 1747, provides a useful guide to the earlier years (ICP/M—Ac. 1743 'State of Tyrie and Mull'). The years given represent the crop-years. Thus the first year, 1736, includes the rent received from Martinmas 1736 to Martinmas 1737, and marks the first year after the expiration of the old tacks. 1737 includes the receipts for 1737–8, the first year of the new leases and higher rents. The list is as follows:

1736 [–7] ...	£514	18	8	1740 [–1] ...	£1,199	4	5
1737 [–8] ...	624	6	2	1741 [–2] ...	741	9	2
1738 [–9] ...	931	10	4	1742 [–3] ...	825	2	11
1739 [–40] ...	1,071	0	7	1743 [–4] ...	1,113	10	7

The rental (*i.e.* the rents due) for Mull and Tiree in 1736/7 was £994. It was raised to £1323 in 1737/8 and remained at approximately this figure in the six following years. It will at once be apparent that receipts in 1736/7 and 1737/8 were abysmally low, undoubtedly reflecting the very low cattle prices prevailing. A marked improvement in revenue followed in the years 1738/9 to 1740/1, and this almost certainly resulted directly from the rising cattle prices—the long delayed emergence from the depression of the 'thirties (see graph opp. p. 144 and Appendix p. 135).

Receipts from the insular districts throughout the 'forties do not however reflect the generally much higher level of cattle prices, and this is significant. 1741/2 and 1742/3 were years of poor yields, which contrast with remarkably inflated cattle prices. And, to anticipate the evidence somewhat, 1744/5 was the beginning of a prolonged crisis signalised by low receipts and heavy arrears; this continued until almost the end of the decade.[33] Had cattle prices been the only factor, one might have found the Duke's revenue in a healthy and improving state throughout the 'forties. Other circumstances were evidently exercising a prepotent influence, and these must now be considered.

The West Highlands appear to have escaped the terrible winter of 1739–40, when men, cattle and wild life suffered heavy mortality and extreme privations in the Lowlands of Scotland and throughout much of North-West Europe. At any rate neither the severe winter of 1739–40 nor the wretched harvest of 1740, with its aftermath of hunger riots, are reflected in the insular revenues, as one would expect them to be if cattle had died in great numbers and if large quantities of meal had had to be bought.[34] In mainland areas of the estate rents continued to come in fairly easily in the early 'forties, as the Chamberlain informed the Duke's Commissioner, Lord Milton, in December 1743 (SAL 401 Letter of 29 Dec. 1743). In the islands, however, things were far otherwise. Despite buoyant markets the receipts dropped to a level suggesting widespread tenant difficulties in 1741/2 and 1742/3. There is no specific evidence about climatic conditions, but heavy mortality among cattle, combined with high rents, probably lies behind the crisis. This assumption gains support from evidence from Tiree in 1748 and from the fact that in 1744 the new Duke instructed his factor in Tiree to lower rents in certain cases, as the general level was too high (ICP/V65 'Instructions' 1744).

The Crisis Develops: The 3rd Duke's Counter-Measures

The improvement of 1743–4 shown in the higher receipts, was short-lived. Not only the islands, but the whole mainland also, were by the spring of 1745 in the depth of a renewed crisis from which they were long in emerging. It ran counter to cattle markets,

which were rising again after a fall in 1744 (a fall much less severe in Argyll than in England, to judge by the Knockbuy prices). The predisposing cause was the exorbitant level of rents, but more specific circumstances served to trigger off the crisis. Mortality among cattle was at a disastrous level in early 1745 and was evidently due to severe climatic conditions in the winter of 1744/5. One laird alone lost 510 cattle 'by mere want' in Glenorchy.[35] 'I cannot express the sufferings of this shire', Stonefield wrote to Milton in April 1745. 'Their loss of cattle is very great and universal, and corn is very scarce and dear, but now we have fine weather, I wish it may abate the mortality. We used commonly to receive £4,000 [Sterling] of his Grace's rents before this time of year, and we have not yet received £2,000' (SAL 403, Stonefield to Lord Milton, 18 Apr. 1745).

Thus the months immediately preceding the Rising were a time of hunger and catastrophe in the West Highlands. What effects this had in producing a mood favourable to the Jacobite Rising can only be conjectured, but it may have played a significant part in the situation. One may follow the prolonged crisis through the estate accounts. Arrears of rent in 1743–4 for the whole Argyll estates in Scotland, with a gross rental of about £7,500 Sterling, were approximately £2,000, which was very much more than in the Duke's earlier years.[36] By 1744–5 arrears cannot have been less than £4,000; in 1745–6 they exceeded £5,000 and were still larger in 1746–7; they declined to a little under £4,000 in 1747–8.[37]

The Rising placed an added strain on the West Highland economy. Farms were burnt and cattle driven off by the Government forces in Morvern and neighbouring districts after Culloden.[38] Tenants were called away from their work or were burdened with the payment of a substitute. But these circumstances, and any temporary interruption that the Rising may have caused in the cattle-trade, only aggravated what was already a desperate situation in the spring of 1745. The rent of Morvern was better paid than that of some districts outside the area affected by the Rising, as for example Tiree, where neither government nor Jacobites recruited many men (ICP/M—Ac. 1745, 1746). The severe loss of cattle in early 1745 is probably the most significant factor, for its effects would be felt for several years after, until the losses had been made good, and would not be wholly compensated by the high cattle prices which followed the murrain outbreak in England in 1745–6 (Haldane 1952:121; Reid 1942:177–81). It seems most likely that the severe climatic conditions of winter 1744–5 were prolonged into the two years following and affected other parts of Scotland.[39]

The Lord President's optimistic rental of 1737–8 was revealed as so much wishful thinking in the succeeding ten years. The Duke's revenue gained little or nothing by the increase in rents in the insular districts. In the years from 1738 to 1743 the accounts for Tiree and Mull show that in no single year was the rental achieved, and that in fact annual receipts, on a rental of about £1,320, averaged only £980 (ICP/M—Ac 1743 'State of Tyrie and Mull'). Similarly, after Mull was joined to Airds' factory of Morvern in 1744, receipts for these districts averaged £978 a year, some £300 short of the rental

(ICP/M—Ac 1744, 1745, 1746, 1747, 1748). The situation was even more catastrophic in Tiree after being disjoined from Mull in 1743. In the period 1744 to 1746 inclusive, the island, though scarcely touched by the Rising, yielded no more then £732 in all, *viz.* an average of £244 per annum on a rental of just over £500 (ICP/M—Ac. 1746). The rest simply formed a massive toll of arrears. Even allowing for what might be collected of the arrears, the average yield, on the Chamberlain's reckoning in 1748 had been no more than £300 a year in the ten year period 1738 to 1747, whilst the Deputy Chamberlain estimated that more than £1,400 Sterling of the Tiree rents had been lost in that time.[40]

The succession of Archibald, 3rd Duke of Argyll, in 1743, produced important modifications in the tenurial system. More politically alert than his predecessor to the spread of Jacobitism in the West Highlands, he instructed his various chamberlains in the following terms in the autumn of 1744: 'I would have it made a condition of the tacks that every tenant should take an oath of allegiance and a promissory oath never to rise or encourage any rising in rebellion against the present government.' Loyalty moreover, would be rewarded: 'You are to use your endeavours to introduce tennants well disposed to the government and my family. And as I am informed that my lands are rather too high rented in those countreys, so that there may be a necessity for some abatement of rent, I do approve that these abatements be chiefly given in those farms where you bring in people well disposed to my interest.'[41]

This revival of political considerations in the management of the estate marks a significant retreat from the almost purely commercial principles which had recently controlled the choice of tenants. It must have heartened the Campbell colonists at this critical juncture. They proved the most reliable element in the west in 1745–6, and their presence was perhaps not without importance in limiting the areas of disaffection. The Prince gained many recruits from Morvern, which lay outside the area of Campbell settlement, in contrast with the islands of Mull and Tiree, where the Jacobite sympathies of the natives were counteracted by the activity of the Campbells. Tests of loyalty continued to be required of tenants through most or all of the 3rd Duke's time.

A second important modification in the tenurial system was made in 1747, when the Duke relaxed the total prohibition which his predecessor had placed on sub-letting and permitted the larger tenants to sub-let land, 'provided the tacksmen [*viz.* the large tenants] be restricted from convenanting and receiving from their sub-tenants any further payment or prestation of any kind than six days' service of one man yearly . . . over and above the rent payable by themselves for the lands subsett' (ICP/M 'Instructions' 1747). This relaxation may have been dictated in part by the growing extent of land lying waste through the failure of small tenants, and it restored a component of the traditional economy which could not yet be given up without loss of production. Significantly, too, it marked a reversion towards what Stonefield had recommended when he urged that leases should be confined to substantial men and not conferred on small tenants who would not survive bad seasons.

A third modification which the 3rd Duke was induced to make took the form of rent-reductions. These were not as large as the Chamberlains recommended, but they were significant of a more realistic and flexible approach. The rental of Mull and Morvern was reduced in 1748 by nearly 10 per cent, from £1,227 (as rentalled in 1744) to £1,104. Tiree did not benefit, however, in spite of her needy condition, though there had been some small reductions in that Island in 1745 and 1746 (ICP/M—Ac annually 1744–8 inclusive). The situation had become serious to the point of catastrophe by 1747. For three years consecutively, arrears ran at an unprecedented level, for two years almost equalling the gross rental of the estate. Many tenants had failed and large areas lay uncultivated. Even the loyal Campbells were threatening to leave the islands, as Stonefield explained in a memorial to the Duke in 1747—'The condition of the tennants in every part of Argyllshire having declined much for two or three years backward, those of Mull and Tiry have suffered as much as their neighbours, tho' they could not bear it so well, as they were but weak and their rents dear. Many of them who, or their predecessors, have gone to settle in that country since my Lord Argyll got that estate, and who are most attached to his interest, are disposed to leave it and come back to the body of the shire. This will be a great loss to his Grace, and endeavours ought to be used rather to encourage them and engage others of that friendly disposition to settle there' (SAL 405 'Memorial on the Duke of Argyll's Business' 1747). Having a half-brother, Archibald Campbell, resident at Killichronain in Mull, Stonefield was likely to know the settlers' mind. The wholesale removal of Campbell colonists from the islands would be a disaster of the first magnitude, threatening alike the Duke's future revenue from those districts and their political security.

Other reports from his officials in 1747 and 1748 presented a distressingly similar story in all districts of the estate; cattle dead, tenants ruined, arrears high, land waste. After the death of their cattle, many tenants were removed in Kintyre (SAL 405 'Memorial on the Duke of Argyll's Business' 1747). Something like half the tenants were insolvent in the heart-land farms round Inveraray and Loch Awe and had either failed to take up their tacks or been obliged by their circumstances to give them up.[42] In Mull the factor, Campbell of Airds, recorded twenty-six farms (out of a total of some ninety) 'which are now or likely to be waste in whole or part against Whitsunday 1747', and warned the Duke that these could not be rented at so high a rent after the insolvent tenants removed (SAL 405 'Remarks of several tenements in Mull' 1747). It was for these reasons that the Campbell gentry of Mull, many of them in arrears and recorded in this list, were seriously contemplating quitting the island and returning to the mainland.

Nowhere is the plight of the tenants more plainly revealed than in the factor of Tiree's report on the farms under his charge in Tiree and the neighbouring island of Coll. This report the Duke had himself ordered after receiving disquieting information from the factor about the state of rents and the poverty of the tenants. A combination of high rents and severe climatic conditions appears to have operated on the tenants

to produce a quite exceptional level of failure and poverty. 'Were the arrears presently due out of that estate, with the current rents for cropt 1747 completely levyed, I may with assurance say it, there woud not remain thereafter of effects near what woud stock one fourth part of the island.' So the new factor Campbell of Barnacarry declared in 1747 (ICP V65 'Memorial by Archibald Campbell of Barnacarie' 1747). Misfortune struck large and small tenants, gentry and commoners, loyal Campbell colonists and disaffected natives. Great tracts of once fertile machair lay under blown sand. 'Traik of cattle' left the island understocked. An island which had recently been rentalled at over £530 sterling was now producing barely £300 a year (ICP/V65 'Memoriall by Stonefield concerning Tyree' 1748). Scarcely anything survived of the Lord President's new system of tenure except a handful of leases from which the holders implored release.[43]

Typical of this remnant of leaseholders was Alexander McIlvra, who had the farm of Hough. 'This farm was set in tack to Alexander McIlvra of Penighaill by the Lord President. This man is now in arrears to your Grace the sum of £1097:2:10 Scots. The present factor could ne'er receive payment of him as he had no effects in Tyrie and very little in Mule where he resides, only the mailling of Penighail and Carsaig, holding of your Grace. There is horning and caption against him for the greater part of this sum. He has petitioned your Grace more than once to get terms to clear up these arrears but had no return . . . 'Tis the factor's opinion, as this farm has and does yearly suffer greatly by sand-blowing, it would want an abatement yearly of £36.'[44] This sum represented 25 per cent of the rent of the farm.

Of the thirty-six farms in Tiree (some of which were normally combined), the Lord President had, it seems, successfully set twenty-five in tack in 1737. His negotiations for the letting of the remaining eleven had proved abortive (contrary to the expectations expressed in his report in 1737) and were simply let year by year to small tenants, whose condition is illustrated by Balevouline—'The factor observes that this town was set by the Lord President at so dear a rent that he coud get no tennents to take the same in tack, the paying of which rent so reduced the tennents [*i.e.* the nine occupying without a lease] as that they became insolvent and a great part, almost the half, thereof became waste, which has been so these severall years past. . . .'

Of the twenty-five Tiree farms actually leased in 1737, only eleven remained in tack in 1748, and in almost every case the holders were pleading to be rid of the burden of the lease or to have the rent very much reduced, as in McIlvra's case. The lease of fourteen of the twenty-five farms (that is, 56 per cent of them) had lapsed by the tenants' falling into arrears. Numbers of the gentry are found in this condition. Hector MacLean of Gott and Vuill had fallen into deep arrears, become insolvent and so lost his tack. Donald McLarin, deputy factor, lost all his effects and gave up his tack of Barrapol and Kenvar, which then served to graze poynded cattle. Campbell of Ballimore, one-time factor, whose timely offer had assisted the Lord President to breach the opposition and get the island rented in 1737, had been so reduced that he gave up his farms there. John Campbell, who claimed that his grandfather had been the first

Campbell settler in Tiree (Cregeen 1968:170), received a lease of three farms in the west of the island in 1737, but 'in a short time thereafter became insolvent by reason of the dear rent he offered and is still considerably in arrears to your Grace'. His lands were occupied by eleven tenants, who 'are all in low circumstances except Archibald McDonald . . .'. The list could be prolonged monotonously.

The new tenurial system was thus virtually foundering by 1748. So far from fulfilling the Lord President's expectations that revenue and productivity would expand and greater security be conferred on tenants, the new leases appear rather to have been associated with widespread misery and insecurity among the tenants and chaos in the ducal revenue. Stonefield's summing up of the situation in Tiree in 1748 was pungent without being self-congratulatory.

> It was with intention to reform the country as much as the nature of the thing would admit of that the late Duke dismissed the tacksmen, imagining that they squeezed the under-tennents by exacting high rents, but very unluckily my Lord President followed the same plan, by augmenting the rents beyond what the tacksmen ever exacted, a rent that the country was less capable to yield during the factory than in the tacksmen's time because they occupied severall of the farms with their own stock and when any of the lands could not be sett, they possessed it themselves' (ICP/V 65 'Memoriall by Stonefield concerning Tyree' 1748).

The restoration of the tacksman system was in fact being actively considered. Stonefield, reporting on Tiree in 1748, recommended that the first essential measure was to reduce rents to under £400 and to let the farms either to the existing tenants or to a tacksman—'I have been making tryalls in that shape likeways, and the highest offer I could bring anybody was to £340' (ICP V65 'Memoriall by Stonefield concerning Tyree' 1748). This was roughly the amount of tack-duty paid by the tacksmen of Tiree before the Lord President's visit. John Campbell, brother to Barnacarry and deputy-chamberlain of Argyll, even offered to become tacksman of the whole of the ducal estate in Mull, Morvern and Tiree, at a tack-duty of £1,333 6s. 8d. Sterling, but no more is heard of this breath-taking project (ICP V65 'Memorial concerning Mull, Morvern and Tyree' 1747).

The Tenurial Reorganisation: General Assessment

A number of general conclusions emerge from this examination of the 2nd Duke's tenurial reforms. It is clear that the accounts which have hitherto been available, and have been very influential, are in need of drastic revision. Culloden's report cannot be taken as a dispassionate account but as the attempt of an astute politician to justify measures which he had carried out against the advice of the Duke's senior officials. He made the tacksmen, and to a lesser extent the Duke's officials, the butt of his main accusations, and in so doing diverted attention from what was most responsible for the

ills of the tenants of the insular districts—the depressed condition of the cattle markets, on which tenants depended to pay their rents, and the Duke's heavy demands upon the tacksmen.

The 8th Duke of Argyll's account of the tenurial reforms emphasises the humane and rational intentions of the 2nd Duke and his agent, and represents the new leases as the opening of a happy and secure era in the insular districts. His historical writings, brilliant though they were in many ways, had as their main object the defence of the landlords' record in the Highlands, and this he carried out with vigour and success but at some expence of accuracy. He disregarded, or was ignorant of, a great many relevant documents in the Inveraray Castle archives which shed a quite different light on the tenurial reform.

These documents have been extensively used in this investigation. Among the main conclusions which they suggest, the first is that the tacksmen in the insular districts were by no means so much to blame for the plight of their sub-tenants during the 'thirties as Culloden represented. It would appear that the Duke's management of these districts was governed in the main by his need for revenue, and that the increasing load of rent which he required of the tacksmen reacted seriously on the condition of the mass of the population, and was especially damaging to their economy in the period of depressed cattle-prices which immediately preceded the tenurial reorganisation.

This tenurial reorganisation had its humane and progressive aspects, as is apparent from Culloden's report. If it had been carried out in the way proposed by the Chamberlain, it could have become the turning-point in the development of the economy of the West Highlands. But the strong financial motivation behind the reform proved overwhelming and in Culloden's hands the tenurial reorganisation turned into a disaster both for the Duke and for the tenants who were supposed to be its main beneficiaries. The following years witnessed, not the radical improvement intended by Culloden, but—in spite of the new buoyancy of cattle prices—chaos in the Duke's revenue, widespread distress and ruin on an unusual scale among the new tenants, and the virtual collapse of the new tenurial system over large areas of the estate.

This failure was as unnecessary as it was lamentable. Had the Duke trusted his Chamberlain he might have seen such progress in the development of agriculture as Campbell of Shawfield achieved in Islay through the agency of his tacksmen (MacDonald 1811:75–7). Stonefield's solution would no doubt have been biased in favour of his clan and would have restricted leases to substantial tenants of the *daoine uaisle*, but it would have had the advantage of developing out of the existing economic and social situation instead of running counter to it. His policy of moderate and flexible rents would have encouraged a real sense of security and trust in the tenants, basically more important that the grant of formal leases,[45] and would have led to a rapid growth of technological progress and an expansion of the Duke's revenues.

The Duke preferred to be advised by Culloden, whose abilities in the field of government were not matched by equal competence in the management of the Duke's West

Highland estates. By rejecting the best available advice, Culloden established the new tenurial system on foundations which were unsound from the beginning. His most serious error was to stimulate competitive bidding for the leases and to produce, as a result, a rental that could only end by ruining the successful candidates and injuring the estate. The Chamberlain's warnings on this head should have been heeded. In these districts where the native clans had contended over land for centuries and where recently they had been deprived by the Campbells, competition for leases was simply a prolongation of clan warfare, and bids were used like sword thrusts to injure rival families and clans.[46] The auction of leases thus did not operate to establish a fair or realistic valuation of land; it reflected the candidates' desires and passions rather than their financial resources.

The greatly advanced rents were, as has been shown, the chief cause of the failure of the reform. Culloden was the director of the tenurial reorganisation but the ultimate responsibility must lie with the 2nd Duke, who set the objectives and chose the instrument. Like most men of his rank in eighteenth-century Britain, the Duke conceived of improvement in terms of magnificent building and the development of parks and domainal farm-lands (Habakkuk 1952). He showed extreme reluctance to divert any financial resources from these to the capital outlay on drains, dykes, fences and buildings that the estate in general required if any real progress were to be made. This would have to be left to 'a young man who could hope for thanks from those who were to succeed him'.

The effects of this unwillingness to carry through agricultural innovation by providing financial support became obvious in the island of Tiree. Here Culloden had shown a genuine interest in encouraging improvement and had granted an improving lease on favourable terms to a Glasgow merchant, Lachlan MacLean. As an experiment it proved completely successful. He succeeded in growing clover and sown grasses and showed the possibility of ending the mortality in cattle that was so frequent an occurrence in the Spring months (ICP/M 'Description of the Island of Teree' 1748). The general adoption of his methods in the island would have transformed the economy, but fences were necessary to protect the crops from trespassing animals, and to build them tenants required a great deal of practical assistance (Campbell 1965:31). Such assistance was not generally available until almost the end of the century, in the 5th Duke's time. As a result, agricultural improvement had little real impact on traditional methods in the years following Culloden's visit.

The mass of small tenants had been economically too dependent on the tacksmen and sub-tacksmen for credit and working capital to stand long unaided, and were quite incapable of developing a more productive agriculture without generous treatment from the landlord when their masters had been removed. In the traditional system, with all its limitations, tacksmen had a real interest in maintaining their man-power and probably discharged their obligations faithfully until heavy demands began to crush them in the eighteenth century. Precisely at a time when the small tenants were

deprived of their normal supports from the traditional system, they were required to pay considerably higher rents. Moreover, rents paid to the tacksmen had not only been lower but could be partly paid in labour and agricultural products. These could not readily be turned into cash to pay the landlord's rents.

The grossly inflated rental which Culloden reported to the Duke as a triumph represented, in fact, no advance in technology, no expansion of production, and no widening of commercial outlets. It simply transferred the claim to non-existent wealth from the tenant to the Duke. When it failed to materialise the tenant lost his lease together with what stock he had. Essentially what was taking place in the 'forties was an intensification of the kind of management that the Duke had applied to these districts since his succession. The results were now more serious both for the tenants and for the landlord's revenue. Previously land left vacant by the failure of sub-tenants was not unproductive, since the tacksmen would make use of it. Now such land was truly waste and unproductive, and the revenue suffered.

The tenurial reorganisation of 1737 was certainly a turning-point in the history of the insular districts of the Argyll estate. It may fairly be asked whether, so far from representing a great leap forward, it did not in fact inflict irreparable injury on the inhabitants, damage social institutions of considerable value, and postpone the development of a healthy economic system for many years. The blame cannot at any rate be laid on those convenient scapegoats, the tacksmen.

A Summary View of the Tenurial Reorganisation and its Aftermath

The tenurial system of most Highland estates until the eighteenth century was well advanced rested on an élite of upper tenants known as tacksmen, who were usually close kinsmen or functionaries of the chief. They occupied extensive holdings of land on a virtually hereditary basis, paid rents to the chief in money and kind at a privileged rate, and gained a profit-margin (amounting in the areas studied here to 30–35 per cent) by sub-letting part of their holding to sub-tenants at higher rents, paid in money, kind and labour. It became fashionable among writers and publicists in the eighteenth century to regard the tacksmen as an oppressive and parasitic class. In fact, however, as Dr Johnson perceived, they performed vital services within Highland communities, were leaders of the clan both in war and peace, patrons and not seldom practitioners of the arts, and middlemen in the processes of production.

In the insular districts of the Argyll estate, only recently forcibly acquired from the MacLeans of Duart, the tacksmen controlled larger areas than ordinary. Under them much of Mull, Morvern, Tiree and certain other islands was settled by Campbells and their friends in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. These colonies were of great political importance to the Whig Dukes of Argyll in maintaining control of the mainly Jacobite West Highlands, but they needed support and favour, threatened as they were by the deprived natives to whom the Jacobite cause offered not only a sentimental appeal but the hope of restoring the *status quo*.

A combination of political, economic and idealistic motives caused the 2nd Duke of Argyll to undertake a wholesale reorganisation of land-tenure in these districts in 1737. There can be little doubt that the Duke was chiefly motivated by hopes of increasing his revenues. Since his succession in 1703 he had applied to the management of his Scottish estates commercial ideas that ran counter to the Highland tradition of managing land to support a following of kinsmen and dependents. Steeply increased rents had begun to produce immense stresses in these districts long before 1737. Tacksmen were forced inevitably to pass heavier rents on to their tenants, and signs of distress and impoverishment were evident already by the end of the 'twenties.

The situation became more acute in the thirties, when the cattle markets on which Highland tenants depended to pay their rents sank to their lowest level for many years. The deepening poverty of the tenants seriously affected the Duke's revenues and made him suspect mismanagement or fraud in his officials and tacksmen. Meantime, in Morvern the Camerons, who controlled the land in defiance of the Duke's ownership, had overplayed their hand and brought into existence among the lesser clans a resistance movement which the Duke's Chamberlain, Campbell of Stonefield, was not slow to exploit. Stonefield's conclusion that the time was ripe for change, chiming in with the Duke's dissatisfaction over revenue, led to the momentous tour of Duncan Forbes of Culloden, the Duke's business agent, to the insular districts in 1737.

The removal of the tacksmen was a foregone conclusion. The Chamberlain had already appointed factors in Mull and Morvern to take over the tacksmen's administrative duties. Culloden's reorganisation of tenures was much more radical than the Chamberlain had recommended. Not only were the tacksmen removed from all parts of the insular districts, but leases were granted to large numbers of small tenants of runrig farms as well as to the gentlemen of the clan. Further by throwing leases of farms open to competitive bidding, Culloden was able to increase the rental by roughly 40 per cent.

Culloden described the favourable outcome of the tour to the Duke in a report that has become well known. He presented the most optimistic view of the future both for the new tenants and the Duke and laid most of the blame for the tenants' plight on the tacksmen, whom he roundly abused as 'harpies'. His report showed an awareness of the urgent need for agricultural improvement and help from the landlord in the insular districts, and he regarded the large increases in rent as a reasonable return for security of tenure and the abolition of predial services. Nevertheless the report was less than a fair assessment of the situation, his accusations against the tacksmen and officials were supported by no evidence and were probably largely unfounded, and he disregarded the Chamberlain's strong advice to keep rents at a moderate level and to be cautious in granting leases to small tenants.

Events quickly proved the Chamberlain right and Culloden wrong. The Duke was soon disappointed of his hopes of increased revenue. Tenant insolvencies ran at a remarkable level in the 'forties; not only many small tenants but numbers of substantial

tenants were reduced to poverty. Arrears accumulated and leases were given up. In Tiree, ten years after Culloden's tour, less than a third of the farms were still under leases. The Jacobite Rising of 1745–6 and a series of bad seasons aggravated the situation and were the precipitating cause of much of the insolvency, but in general the economic climate of the 'forties was more favourable than in the 'thirties and cattle prices were notably higher. The ultimate cause of the widespread distress among tenants and of the chaos in ducal revenues was evidently the exorbitant level of tents fixed by the Lord President and the inflexible way in which they were subsequently enforced. It further aggravated the rate of failure that many of the tenants had only recently emerged from the relatively sheltered condition of sub-tenants and were being exposed, without sufficient resources or working capital, to the chill air of the commercial world.

The 3rd Duke, who succeeded in 1743, appointed Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton, as his principal agent in place of Culloden. He was more practical and humane than his predecessor and gave more weight to Stonefield's advice. Though he failed to prevent the ruin of a high proportion of the new tenants, he alleviated some of the worst effects of the new system. He was especially sensitive to the political dangers which it had created by unsettling the colonists, and took steps to restore their confidence and security. Tests of loyalty were incorporated in leases, and a brake was put on the unrestricted commercial management of the estate.

It was seriously proposed in 1747–8 that the system of tacksmen should be restored, but in fact the new tenurial system was to remain a permanent institution of the Argyll estates. There was no going back on the principle, finally established in the 2nd Duke's time, though developing since the seventeenth century, that the primary purpose of land was to provide the landlord with revenue, not to maintain his kinsmen and followers. This new attitude towards land would, as time passed, gradually eliminate the old aristocracy of the clan from their positions of privilege, leaving the Highlands rich in tradition but impoverished in leaders.

The gradual disappearance of this élite in general throughout the Highland region probably hastened the lairds away from their estates, as Dr Johnson had predicted. A social vacuum was left which the minister and the factor, whose consequence grew with the departure of the tacksmen, only partially filled. The tenants gained a new independence from the gentry of the clan but lost the protection which they had given them, and were exposed to new hazards. The landlord, released from obligations to his kinsmen, was free to develop his estate as he wished. He was bound, admittedly, by legal contracts but was less amenable than before to the rules of custom and kindliness. The triumph of economic individualism represented a new and disturbing force in the Highlands.

There was, however, on the Argyll lands, a prolonged period during which, after the initial shock and chaos of the tenurial reorganisation, elements of continuity reasserted themselves in the insular districts. The raw economic principles, so influential under the 2nd Duke, were tempered, under his successors, in the selection of tenants.

The 3rd Duke replaced the open auction of leases by a system of private offers which made it possible to assess candidates for farms not only for their economic virtues but their political reliability and their attachment to the family of Argyll. Memorials submitted by candidates exemplify this fusion of traditionalism and modernity: they urge their claims as tenants by reciting improvements carried out or promised, and offering, usually, an increase in rent, and at the same time they reinforce their cause by citing the ancient ties between their forbears and the house of Argyll.

The ascendancy of the Campbell settler families in the insular districts had been severely shaken by the tenurial reorganisation. A privileged position would never again be awarded automatically to those who could claim descent from the founder of the clan Campbell. Nevertheless the dominance of the Campbell gentry in Mull and Tiree remained formidable for longer than might have been expected, for it had a strong basis in their economic resources, their clan-consciousness and tightly drawn unity, and their influence over the administration. Moreover, the revival of Jacobite activity, capable of causing alarm to the Duke and his friends during the 'fifties, and the continuing hostility of the MacLeans and Camerons to the Campbells, still remarkable at the end of the eighteenth century, reinforced the dominant position of the colonists. It was brought to an end only in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening of the nineteenth century as a result of revolutionary economic and social changes which affected the Highlands in common with the rest of Britain. In the rise of a new crofter class, compounded of diverse social elements, one may see the Highlands coming to terms with the industrial age. Half wage-earner, half agriculturalist, the crofter had a foot in both camps, and carried much of the essence of the traditional Highlands into the modern world.

APPENDIX

Note on the Knockbuy Cattle Prices

The cattle prices on which the lower line of the graph is based are prices which Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy recorded in his rentals as having been credited to tenants in payment of their rents. Stots (bullocks) have been excluded from the data, since their prices varied widely from one beast to another according to their age. To have any significance, it would have been necessary to base calculations on stots of a particular age, *e.g.* two-year olds, and thus exclude the bulk of the data. The problem was solved by omitting stots altogether, and using only the prices allowed for tenants' cows. This still left a reasonable amount of data, since the laird was taking approximately as many cows as stots from tenants. Prices of cows offer a more reliable basis for comparison. Cows were already fully grown animals (the younger female animals are stated apart as heifers and queys) and thus formed a more homogeneous group, with smaller variations in price from one animal to another. (This is made apparent in a complete list and valuation of Knockbuy's animals contained in the rental in 1750.)

The accompanying list on page 136 shows the details on which the graph is based. Its value clearly varies from year to year with the number of animals entering into the calculation of the average price. For the purposes both of the table and of the graph, prices have been allocated to their true year, which is not necessarily the year of the rental, since arrears of rent might be cleared several years after they were incurred. The average prices appear in the graph in the calendar year following the rental (or crop) year,

since the rental runs from November to November, with most of the cattle purchased by the laird from January onwards.

The upper line of the graph shows prices paid for beef oxen by the Navy Victualling Board at their London yard (Beveridge 1939:568–71). They represent the average of prices for October, November and December each year, and the points on the graph are therefore marked slightly later than those on the lower line.

Comparison between the two lines shows a remarkably close similarity in the Argyll and English price trends. Both reveal high though fluctuating prices in the first three decades of the century, then severe depression in the 'thirties, followed by a return to more buoyant prices in the 'forties. After 1747 the Argyll trend diverges from the English trend rather more. The boom of 1749–51 in the Argyll prices (confirmed from independent sources) has no counterpart in the southern prices, and in the 'fifties the English series shows a buoyancy unmatched by the stabler Argyll price movements.

Crop Year	*Calendar Year*	*Number of Cows*	*Average Price*
			£ Scots
1728	1729	11	14 18 0
1729	1730	2	15 18 0
1730	1731	3	16 15 7
1731	1732	6	13 0 0
1732	1733	13	13 5 4
1733	1734	8	14 10 10
1734	1735	4	12 15 0
1735	1736	8	13 2 2
1736	1737	6	12 6 8
1737	1738	27	12 13 11
1738	1739	9	13 10 4
1739	1740	13	15 14 5
1740	1741	—	
1741	1742	8	16 15 0
1742	1743	6	23 5 5
1743	1744	3	16 16 8
1744	1745	14	19 1 9
1745	1746	3	18 7 8
1746	1747	1	16 3 4
1747	1748	5	17 4 4
1748	1749	—	
1749	1750	83	24 0 0
1750	1751	2	26 13 4
1751	1752	—	
1752	1753	1	17 6 0
1753	1754	—	
1754	1755	3	19 10 0
1755	1756	2	18 3 0
1756	1757	6	19 16 0
1757	1758	3	17 14 0
1758	1759	3	18 6 0
1759	1760	2	17 8 0
1760	1761	12	17 2 0

NOTES

1 See Grant 1924 and McKerral 1947.

2 See Campbell, J. L. 1963: 18–21; MacCormick 1923: 113–15; Mackenzie 1964: 142–5; MacPhail 1914: 245–337; Mitchell 1900: 508–37; Sinclair, A. M. 1899: 178–253; Willcock 1907: 197–9. I have also consulted numerous documents in ICP.

3 ICP/V20—Rental 1706; Exhibits: 132 (where the tack to Cluanes is dated 1701).

4 The role of the tacksmen in providing intelligence and dealing with political and religious suspects is evidenced by many papers in SAL and SP.

5 ICP* no. 213 'A Representation of the Present State of Morverne', 30 Nov. 1719. Further evidence of the turbulence in Morvern between 1715 and 1745 comes from ICP/M—L'Minutes of Business' 1744, and SL, particularly vol. 3: 10–12, a letter from Archibald Campbell of Stonefield to the Duke, n.d. but probably Mar. 1732. The anonymous author of *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750* gives an account of the acts of terrorism used by the Camerons to force a minister out of a farm in the neighbourhood of Fort William which had been previously in the hands of a Cameron. '. . . throughout all Lochaber and the adjacent wild countries, the farms have been always given to the cadets of the lesser families that are the heads of tribes, which they possess for ages without any lease, and look upon them as their right of inheritance, and when they are not able to pay their rent and are turned out, they look upon the person who takes these farms after them as usurping their right. These people have often refused to take a written lease, thinking that by so doing they give up their right of possession' (Lang 1898: 91–3).

6 Tacksmen in the South-West Highlands normally held between one and four large farms, but very much bigger holdings were to be met with in Kintyre in the seventeenth century as a result of the Marquess of Argyll's plantations (McKerral 1947: 13–14; 1948: 135).

7 Braglen's tack was recorded 25 Sept. 1716 (TRANS. XIX, no. 13). His predecessor as tacksman of Torosay was the head of Braglen's branch of the clan, Campbell of Lochnell, whose tack commenced in 1964 (TRANS. XVII, no. 96).

8 The judicial rental of 1715 defined the pennyland in Mull as equivalent to a 16/8 land of Old Extent, the pennyland in Morvern as equivalent to a 6/8 land.

9 McKerral 1947: 13–14. For a lucid summary of the confusing land denominations in use in the Highlands see McKerral 1948: 179–81. Lamont 1957 and 1958 deals more specifically with land denominations in Islay.

10 For details of rents in money and kind payable in the barony of Ardnamurchan at the same period see Murray 1740: Plate VI—'The Anatomie of the Parish and Barony of Ardnamoruchan and Swinard.'

11 Blum 1961: 394 ff., 414–33; Gille 1949: 118–20; Warriner 1953–4: 168 ff.

12 Grant 1930: 518–19; Gray 1957: 20–1; Morrison 1966: 211–12. The Knockbuy rentals provide abundant evidence of arrears of rent running for several years before being cleared.

13 Gray 1957: 17–18; McKerral 1947: 20–1; and 1948: 135–6; Robertson 1808: 249.

14 Habakkuk 1940 shows that large land-owners in the English midland counties in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were buying up smaller properties in the neighbourhood of their estates and then letting farms to improving tenants at substantial rents.

15 From 1703 to 1712 inclusive £10,050 Sterling was paid to creditors of the 2nd Duke of Argyll. In this period the total revenues of the Argyll estates amounted to £52,493 (ICP/M *Abbreviats of Accompts*).

16 'The sett of the country 1692 expired 1710, and severall proposals were made to the Duke, but still with a view to lessen the rents, but the sub-tacksmen in generall offered if the Duke would accept of them for their severall possessions they would enter into tack 19 years and pay the same rent they payed their masters, which proposals the Duke accepted' (ICP/M—L 'A Particular State of the Lordship of Kintyre.')

17 The main source for events in Morvern at this time is a series of letters from the Chamberlain of Argyll, Archibald Campbell of Stonefield, to the 2nd Duke and other persons in SL 2 and 3.

18 This conflict in interests between chiefs and landlords, which was found in many parts of the Highlands at all periods is discussed by I. F. Grant 1930: 507 ff. It is forcibly illustrated by the annotated map of Morvern and neighbouring districts in Murray 1740 (Plate 2), which shows the considerable areas in the actual occupancy ('possession') of the clan Cameron though owned by a different proprietor.

19 SL 3: 58, a letter dated 11 May 1733; also a letter dated 9 May 1748 from Airds to Lt. General Bland in SAL 406; ICP/M—L 'Minutes of Business' 1744.

20 James and Archibald Campbell successively held the post of Chamberlain of Argyll, James from 1706 to 1729, Archibald from 1729 to 1748. Both also held the appointment of Sheriff-Depute of Argyll (which was normally given to the Chamberlain of Argyll) and were commonly referred to as 'the Sheriff.' They were half-brothers, their father being Rev Alexander Campbell of Auchincloich, who lost his charge of Kilmore in Lorne in 1689 for his refusal to pray for William and Mary. James's mother was a Campbell of Dunstaffnage; Archibald's mother was of the Campbell of Breadalbane family. They traced their descent to the 2nd laird of Lochnell, who flourished in the late sixteenth century. The name of their estate in Lorne, Auchincloich, was rendered into English as 'Stonefield' and attached to their lands at Kilchamaig when the family removed to Kintyre in the seventeenth century. In contrast to their father both the sons were staunch anti-Jacobites (ICP various papers; Burke's Landed Gentry 1952).

21 James Campbell wrote to Lochnell in 1729 asking him to direct to him certain of his people who could not get a holding in Ardnamurchan (SL 1: 195 n.d. but probably 27 Jan. 1729). About the same time he wrote to some inhabitants of Glenorchy, inviting them to settle on his lands: 'It is well known you are as responsable and as good payers of rents as any there, and I should be very sorry that a people so friendly to the name of Campbell and who, as I am informed, are as true Campbells as any of us should meet with such bad encouragement' (SL 1: 195 n.d. but probably 27 Jan. 1729) See also his letter to David Campbell, 12 Feb. 1729 (SL 1: 222–223).

22 A groatland was equivalent to a 4/2 land of Old Extent, that is, rather less than a third of a merkland (McKerral 1948: 181).

23 See SL 2 and 3 *passim*, but particularly letters written by Archibald Campbell on 5 Feb., 6 and 23 Mar. 1732; 22 June and 25 July 1733; 21 Mar. 1734; 6 and 14 Mar. 1735; 18 Dec. 1736; 19 Feb., 10 Apr., 10 May and 3 June 1737.

24 He is referring here to improvements being carried out in the policies at Inveraray.

25 From the Knockbuy rentals it appears that cattle prices continued at rock-bottom until 1739–40. Ballimore's report from Tiree in spring 1737 states that prices were low (CP 2970: 183).

26 The Chamberlain of Argyll was normally appointed, by virtue of his office, Collector of Cess for the county of Argyll. The profits of this appointment, which were considerable, compensated for the low salary he received as Chamberlain and for the fact that as Sheriff-Depute he received no fees or sentence-money (SAL 406. 'Memorial . . . concerning the manner of levying the cess in Argyleshire' 1748). Archibald Campbell, after his resignation from his offices in 1748, came under heavy attack from a number of the landowners in Argyll and the Commissioners of Supply investigated charges that both he and his deceased brother had levied more cess than was legal over a long period of years. They were exonerated in 1754 but Archibald Campbell accepted the Duke's advice to offer £600 to pay for a new tollbooth and court house at Inveraray, an offer which was cheerfully received by the shire (SAL 407, 412, 413, various papers).

27 There were lead-mines at Strontian, operated first by a company formed in 1724 by Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, proprietor of Ardnamurchan. Murray made grandiose claims for this and other mining projects in this district, describing them as 'the Greatest National Improvements this Age has produced' (Murray 1740: Plate IX). His company sold out in 1730 to the York Building

Company, but it had no better success and eventually closed down in 1740, though the mines continued to be worked from time to time until the end of the nineteenth century and finally closed in 1904. At this early period they suffered badly from plundering raids by the Camerons. The miners' settlements of New York near Strontian, and that at Liddesdale in Morvern, associated with the Glendow mines, created a demand for farm produce. (Murray 1740; Cameron 1958 and 1962; SL 3: 14 Mar. 1737; ICP/M—L 'Minutes of Business.' 1744.)

28 Further details about this enterprising laird appear in Cregeen 1959: 144–6.

29 What the sub-tenants of Mull paid the tacksmen was almost certainly the same or nearly the same as the rental of £669 settled for 1736–7 after the tacks came to an end, since the factor appears to have based it on rentals given in by the tacksmen (CP 2960: 31–3, Culloden to Sheriff Campbell and the Duke).

30 There were possibly as many as 400 tenants holding land in the insular districts under Culloden's 'sett'. A Morvern rental exists for 1738, but the earliest post-1737 rentals of Mull and Tiree which I have traced date from 1742 (ICP/M). They do not show, however, which tenants have leases. Information about the Tiree leases comes from ICP/V65 'State of the Farms in Tyrie', 1748. In fifty-one extant Mull leases given in 1737–8, there were approximately three small tenants to one substantial tenant (ICP/M—A29).

31 It appears that tacks may have been given in earlier times to the candidate offering the highest tack-duty (see p. 106 above), but if so it was on a much restricted scale and certainly was not such a threat to the colonists as it later became.

32 This memorial (CP 2970: 173–7) is unsigned and undated. Internal evidence indicates a date in early 1738. The author was evidently one of the inner circle of the Duke's officials or advisers, and may have been Culloden himself. If so, he was becoming aware of some of the problems the reorganisation had brought.

33 Fairly complete estate accounts exist for the Argyll lands from 1742, but not for 1720 to 1741, nor do they lend themselves, for the years 1742–8, to being used to give a comparative series of receipts from the insular districts. This is because of the method of keeping accounts (as for example combining several years together), and also because until 1744 Mull and Tiree were under one factor, but in that year Mull was placed under the factor of Morvern and Tiree under a separate factor, so that the system of accounting was basically altered.

34 See particularly Arnot 1818: 161; Clerk 1892: 149–51, 159; Hamilton 1963: 7; Jones 1964: 138–9; Mitchison 1965: 283–8; Sinclair 1790–8, IV: 300; VI: 131–4; IX: 151–2 and 498 f.; *Scots Magazine* 1740, II: 42, 59, 191, 482–4, 577; III: 45–6, 142–3.

35 Sinclair 1790–8, VIII: 339 f. This event is described (fifty years after the event) as occurring in 1744. I take it to mean the Winter of 1744–5.

36 Arrears on the Argyll estates from 1703 to 1712 inclusive averaged £404 per annum (ICP/M *Abbreviats of Accompts*) but this did not include Kintyre. In the next ten year period, years of fairly high arrears were 1716 (£892) and 1720 (£1120).

37 These totals are approximations. Arrears of mainland districts are given year by year in the accounts. Those of the insular districts are aggregated for the years 1744–6 inclusive. I have assumed insular arrears to be about the same for 1744, 1745 and 1746 (known figures from the Mull and Morvern accounts suggest that this is a fair assumption), and have added to the mainland arrears for each year a third of the aggregated total of insular arrears.

38 Fergusson 1951: 207–15; Haldane 1952: 121; SAL 404 'Memorial by Airds to the Earl of Albemarle', 10 Aug. 1746.

39 It is significant that arrears in the Duke of Argyll's lands in the parishes of Dollar and Muckart (known as 'the Campbell estate' in the accounts) were three times as great for the period 1744–7 as for the period 1741–3 (SAL 405 'Abstract of the Duke of Argyll's Accounts 1744–8').

40 ICP/V65 'Memoriall by Stonefield concerning Tyree' 1748; 'Memorial . . . concerning Mull, Morvern and Tyrie', 1747.

41 Quoted from the Tiree instructions in ICP/V65. A similar instruction went out to the other factors.

42 ICP/M—L 'State of Farms in Argyll Collection that are not in tack' n.d. but *circa* 1748.

43 The factor submitted a rental in 1747 'at the rate he thinks the country may be lett reasonably' (ICP/V65). His rental amounts to £370 19s. 4d. in contrast to Culloden's rental of £533 8s. 2d., which, despite certain reductions, was still the one in use.

44 These and following details of the state of Tiree are based on Barnacarry's survey of 1748 (ICP/V65 'State of the Farms in Tyrie . . .').

45 'Except . . . for its use in areas of large-scale and progressive farming like Norfolk, it does not seem that in general we can regard the lease as a very important instrument in agricultural improvement, nor its absence as a great obstacle to efficiency.'

46 The effects of clan and family rivalries in causing offers for farms to soar to unrealistic heights was noted by one of the 5th Duke's chamberlains in 1771, with reference to Mull and Morvern, 'where offers for the same land came from different people, keenly incensed against each other on account of old feuds and animosities still subsisting between their clans which, on principle of pique or revenge, carried offers beyond the real value of the subject' (Cregeen 1964: xvii, where the subject is further discussed).

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KP Knockbuy Papers. In the possession of Miss Campbell of Kilberry, F.S.A. KP/R refers to two volumes of rentals and accounts kept by Archibald Campbell of Knockbuy from 1728 to 1788.

ICP Inveraray Castle Papers. Lack of a detailed catalogue makes precise references sometimes impossible, but the following abbreviations will be found useful as aids to identifying sources used here:

M and V preceding a number indicate a volume of papers in the Muniment Room and the Vault respectively. M is also used in combination with the following letters to indicate a volume or a type of material in the Muniment Room:

Ac Accounts (in bound volumes). A date is usually added.
G Genealogical material in box-files.
L Loose papers awaiting classification.
R Rentals (in bound volumes). A date is usually added.
* This indicates papers temporarily in the keeping of the Glasgow City Archivist.

As an illustration, ICP/M—Ac 1743 refers to a bound volume of estate accounts dated 1743 in the Muniment Room of Inveraray Castle.

SAL Saltoun Collection. National Library of Scotland.
Boxes of papers are identified by number.

SL Letter books of James and Archibald Campbell of Stonefield.
Scottish Record Office. G.D. 14/10. 3 vols.

TRANS Transcripts made by the 10th Duke of Argyll from original papers and kept in black binders in Inveraray Castle.

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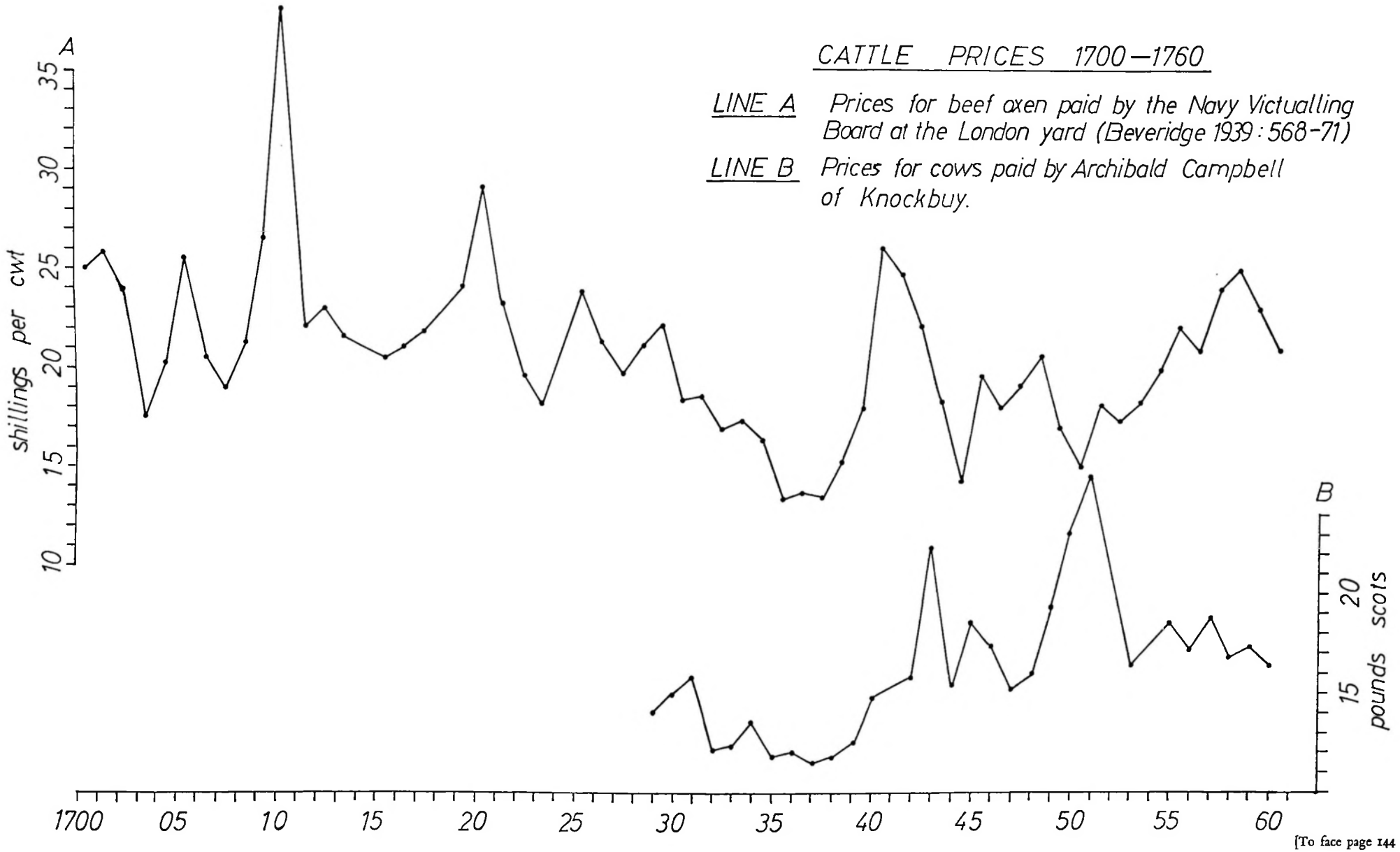

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