

## An Litir Bheag le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 165 (which corresponds to Litir 469). Ruairidh can be contacted at [roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk](mailto:roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk).

*Many Gaels were involved in the politics of Canada. That was especially true in the nineteenth century. One of them tried to make Gaelic an official language.*

*In eighteen ninety (1890), a man proposed a bill in the Senate. He was Thomas MacInnes. He was born in Nova Scotia. The name of the bill was an "Act to provide for the use of Gaelic in Official proceedings".*

*MacInnes said that the Gaels were in first place in Canada in terms of population numbers. How did he work that out? Well, he was counting the Scots and the Irish together.*

*The population of the Irish and Scots together came to almost a million and seven hundred thousand (1,700,000). In the second place were the French with a million and three hundred thousand (1,300,000). The English were in third place with nine hundred thousand (900,000). The Germans were in fourth place with two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000).*

*Shortly before the Gaelic bill appeared in the Canadian Parliament, there was another bill. That bill was*

Bha iomadh Gàidheal an sàs ann am poilitigs Chanada. Bha sin fìor gu h-àraidh anns an naoidheamh linn deug. Dh'fheuch fear aca ri Gàidhlig a dhèanamh na cànan oifigeil.

Ann an ochd ceud deug is naochad (1890), chuir fear bile air adhart anns an t-Seanadh. B' esan Tòmas MacAonghais. Rugadh e ann an Alba Nuadh. B' e ainm a' bhile "Act to provide for the use of Gaelic in Official proceedings".

Thuir MacAonghais gun robh na Gàidheil anns a' phrìomh àite ann an Canada a thaobh àireamh sluaigh. Ciamar a rinn e sin a-mach? Uill, bha e a' cunntadh nan Albannach agus nan Èireannach còmhla.

Bha sluaigh nan Èireannach is nan Albannach còmhla a' tighinn gu cha mhòr millean is seachd ceud mìle (1,700,000) duine. Anns an dàrna àite bha na Frangaich le millean is trì cheud mìle (1,300,000). Bha na Sasannaich anns an treas àite le naoi ceud mìle (900,000). Bha na Gearmailtich anns a' cheathramh àite le dà cheud gu leth mìle (250,000).

Goirid mus do nochd bile na Gàidhlig ann am Pàrlamaid Chanada, bha bile eile ann. Bha am bile sin ag

*aiming to eliminate the [linguistic] rights of the French-speaking people. The Prime Minister, Sir John A MacDonald, spoke against that bill. Some of the Gaels were giving support to the French. But did they support their own language?*

*Very few did. Only seven people in the Senate supported the Gaelic bill. There were forty two against it. But MacInnes said that there were ten people in the Senate who spoke Scottish Gaelic. There were eight who spoke Irish Gaelic. He also said there were thirty two members in the House of Commons in Ottawa who spoke Gaelic – Scottish or Irish.*

*Perhaps the bill was too late. Gaelic was healthy in eighteen fifty (1850). But in eighteen ninety (1890), she was not so healthy.*

*She went down[hill] in Canada. She went downhill in Scotland. But she wasn't submerged [ie didn't die] in Canada or Scotland. Now we have the Gaelic Language Act in Scotland. And there is a Minister for Gaelic in Nova Scotia. Gaelic now has a place in politics. What is the message we get from that? Be confident, friends! [don't lose your belief!]*

amas air cur às do chòraichean luchd-labhairt na Fraingis. Bhruidhinn am Prìomhaire, Sir Iain A Dòmhnallach, an aghaidh a' bhile sin. Bha cuid de na Gàidheil a' toirt taic do na Frangaich. Ach an tug iad taic don chànan aca fhèin?

Thug glè bheag. Thug dìreach seachdnar anns an t-Seanadh an taic do bhile na Gàidhlig. Bha ceathrad 's a dhà na aghaidh. Ach thuirt MacAonghais gun robh deichnear anns an t-Seanadh aig an robh Gàidhlig na h-Alba. Bha ochdnar ann aig an robh Gàidhlig na h-Èireann. Thuirt e cuideachd gun robh trithead 's a dhà buill ann an Taigh nan Cumantan ann an Ottawa aig an robh Gàidhlig – Albannach no Èireannach.

'S dòcha gun robh am bile ro anmoch. Bha Gàidhlig fallain ann an ochd ceud deug is caogad (1850). Ach ann an ochd ceud deug is naochad (1890), cha robh i cho fallain.

Chaidh i sìos ann an Canada. Chaidh i sìos ann an Alba. Ach cha deach i fodha ann an Canada no ann an Alba. A-nise tha Achd na Gàidhlig againn ann an Alba. Agus tha Ministear airson na Gàidhlig ann an Alba Nuadh. Tha àite aig a' Ghàidhlig ann am poilitigs a-nise. Dè an teachdaireachd a tha sinn a' faighinn às a sin? Bithibh misneachail, a chàirdean!