

**Copy Letter by Donald McLeod Esq., of Geanies to the Lord Advocate, dated
Tain 2nd March 1820**

(GB0232/D538/A/8/1)

In consequence of your Los's letter of 24 ulto which I received on the 27th I wrote to the Lord Lieut of the County, to beg he might order down the Staff of the Militia from Dingwall to this Town to assist the civil power in getting the summonses & notices served on the Culrain Tenants, and sent a young gentleman express with the letter; I came in here yesterday early of the day, I gave directions to bring in several stout young men to be sworn as special constables and in the course of the day I swore in Fifty, there were besides these six men of a recruiting party under Capt. Grant of the 78th Regt., who on my requisition were added to the number and, with four officers (Sheriff Officers) Mr McKrae brot from Dingwall there were 10 Sheriff officers. I collected also about twenty gentlemen, all hearty in support of the Kings authority, and that of the Sheriff; We set out from here by seven oclock this morning, the constables & militia having set out two hours earlier and stopped to give them & take ourselves some refreshment at Ardgay, a stage 14 miles from hence. Mr McKrae my substitute at Dingwall met me at Tain yesterday & accompanied us, my substitute at Tain being an old gentlemen very unfit for such an undertaking.

We proceeded to the boundary burn betwixt the property of Invercharron & Culrain, when we were opposed by an infuriated Mob of Women, with about 40 to 50 Men amongst them, and on a height a few hundred yards behind them there appeared to be about 200 men drawn up, and many if not the whole of them armed with museketts – The party went on which then could not be less than 200 women, took post behind a stone dike composed of small stones perfectly fit for missile weapons, and with the most horrible yells and screams, plied us with showers of stones, which many of the persons who came with me were much hurt a list of casualties is sent herewith. I saw that if I had directed the small party of militia to fire on them, that the consequence would have been extremely fatal, probably to us all, as if any of their advanced party fell, the men they had in reserve armed could have surrounded & overpowered us – To show your Lordship that there were no respect of persons, I, who was well known to the Men, was hit with stones five or six times but not hurt – after a full consultation with all the gentlemen present; we concurred in opinion that it was utterly impractical for us to accomplish any part of the object whereon we came, and therefore that our only line of conduct was to retreat keeping as good a face as we could by covering our retreat with the few Militia men we had. I must here mention that we detached them up the hill side on which we were to flank the first body of the assailants, which had the effect of dividing them, a proportion running up the hill to prevent the armed Men from crossing the Boundary, and the remaining part pursued us in our retreat throwing stones with all their force and particularly marking the gentlemen. After I had got into my chaise the back window and one of

the pannels was broken and several stones darted in thro' the window of the chaise at myself, other carriages in company had their pannels broken – After consultation with the respectable gentlemen who accompanied me, they were of opinion in which I do certainly join them that this is an Act of rebellion against the laws and the government, and that a force of 500 Regulars with two or three Field pieces will be necessary to reduce them – I understand that they got the Arms of which they are possessed, from a ship wrecked sometime ago on the West Coast – I had proof that there were armed men from Sutherland amongst them from a man who came thro' them & came up to us at the Inn of Ardgay when we stopped to feed our horses – I have asked all the gentlemen who accompanied me to put their signature to this letter after having heard it read – You will see that there are Eleven of the Militia Sergeants received hurts or wounds, some of them pretty severe, we did seize one prisoner, but he escaped or was rescued, Nine of the special constables were wounded, some of them very much so, one man had his skull fractured by a blow of a stone thrown by a man which hit him on the forehead, the surgeon thinks it is a very dangerous wound – I ought to mention that when the Militia removed from us & when many of their men were wounded & fallen down, two or three of them fired their pieces at the Mob & I believe wounded two or three of them, this was without orders.

It has been suggested to me that perhaps, as the people got possession of the whole notices, when the Sh. Officer was beat off That upon a petition from your Los's to the Court, they might pass an Act of Sederunt holding them to be good notices & directing the Sheriff to hold them as such & to decern in the Removings. –

I am certain that lives must be lost before these infuriated people are removed and that if they are yielded to, it may be attended with the most disastrous consequences. – I leave the whole with you Los's & I hope you must feel satisfied that the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, my substitute, & myself have attempted all that it was possible for us to do. And I have the honour to be etc.