



SCOTTISH LANDOWNERS' FEDERATION

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 25 September 1997

There can be little doubt that issues relating to the private ownership of land in Scotland are under ever-increasing public scrutiny.

In recent years we have seen traditionally private estates purchased by conservation and community interests who believe that they can "do better" than previous owners...at least in-so-far as their particular focus is concerned. We have also seen the growth of a significant land-reform lobby challenging the pattern of private landownership in terms of rights and responsibilities. Even acting fully within their legal rights, landowners and their managers have found themselves severely criticised by press and politicians.

A great number of these issues were local in a UK context, but the overwhelming result of the Referendum for a Scottish Parliament raises their profile to an extent where legislative change is now easily conceivable. Our understanding is that almost all the matters which pertain to land and estate management in Scotland will fall within the jurisdiction of the Scottish Parliament. We have heard within the last week of intentions to introduce National Parks to Scotland, and we know that the Parliament will be looking at the question of public access. Given the distribution of Scotland's population it is unlikely that the majority of members of the new Parliament will have much real understanding of, or sympathy for rural issues, but they will nevertheless have powers over us all.

I do not believe there has ever been another occasion upon which the private landowners in Scotland have needed to come together to meet the challenges which they face. As Convener of their representative body, the Scottish Landowners' Federation, I am considering how best to ensure that landowner's rights are properly protected and that all perspectives of land management are understood.

My purpose in writing is to invite you and your Factor, to a presentation of our plans to enhance the work and profile of the Federation. I am inviting all the major estate owners in Scotland, those we believe to have most at risk from unchecked land reform and environmental legislation, to the Jarvis Ellersly House Hotel, Edinburgh on Friday 17th October, commencing at 11.00am. I enclose a map showing the location of the hotel. We plan a series of short presentations, a discussion session and lunch.

I do hope you will be able to attend and look forward to meeting you. The Federation needs your support...so that it can support you and your interests.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Dingwall-Fordyce

Convener

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