

**Crisis Committee: First Scottish War of Independence**

**Edward de Brus, Earl of Carrick: Position Paper**

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Scotland has not been in a position of greater uncertainty for the past 200 years. The death of our great king, Alexander the Third, has left our nation in turmoil. We gather here today to discuss three vital issues. First, we must decide upon the question of succession. King Alexander appointed Margaret, Maid of Norway as his successor[[1]](#footnote-0). However, she is but a child and in Norway, so it falls to us to decide who shall rule in Scotland. The lack of an obvious successor has left 14 contenders vying for the throne. Many of these men are venerable men of our number who we can entrust our homes and fields to; others are Englishmen. Our goal is to decide which of these men is worthy of our trust and fealty. Our Southern neighbour wishes to include himself in our affairs; such is our second topic of discussion. Do we seek independence from the English throne? Our answer to this question is closely aligned to our third order of business; the question of whether or not we continue our 200 year old uneasy peace with the English.

**The Question of Succession**

I am of the opinion that the obvious successor to the throne is Robert de Bruce the Elder, 5th Lord of Annandale. By feudal law and tanistry, the throne rightfully belongs to him. In fact, this was decided years ago. During the minority of our former King Alexander, Lord Robert was Regent of Scotland and Tanist of the Throne. He was even named Heir Presumptive in the 1260s before Alexander sired any issue[[2]](#footnote-1). He is the closest male relative to the King. Lord Robert is descended from the second daughter of David of Huntingdon and was also the second cousin of the King and is descended from the fourth generation from David, King of Scotland[[3]](#footnote-2). His blood claim is stronger than that of any other claimant, even that of John Balliol, who considers his blood right to the throne to be greater than Lord Robert’s. It must be noted that John Balliol was never given any titles in relation to the throne, and is in fact a new comer to Scottish politics. Balliol is only a third cousin of the king and is descended only by the 5th generation from King David. The only mark in his favour is that he is descended from the eldest daughter of David of Huntingdon[[4]](#footnote-3) as opposed to the second, a minor consideration when other blood connections are considered. It is clear by our traditions of blood that it is Robert de Bruce who holds the greatest claim to the throne.

Even ignoring those traditions, it is clear that among the claimants, Robert would do the best by Scotland. The 14 competitors for the throne are as follows; King Edward 1, Humphrey de Bohun, 4th Earl of Hereford, Floris V, count of Holland, Patrick Dunbar, 7th Earl of Dunbar, Baron William de Vesci, Baron William de Ros, Robert de Pinkeney, Nicholas de Soules, Patrick Galithy, Roger de Mandevil, John Comyn, Baron John Hastings, John Baliol, and King Eric the Second of Norway[[5]](#footnote-4). Only four of these men have any real claim to the throne; John Hastings, through his claim as son of David the first, John Balliol, Robert de Bruce, and Floris V, through his claim that David had given up his claim to his brother William in exchange for lands in Aberdeenshire[[6]](#footnote-5). John Hastings is an English lord who insults Scotland by calling it no real land of its own right as we do not crown nor anoint our kings. He wishes to split our land between the descendents of King David, something that would spell a final death for our nation. We can never allow such a man to become king, nor to hold any great power in Scotland. Floris V’s claim rests on forged documents and make believe transactions. He also lives in Holland and is no true Scot[[7]](#footnote-6). In contrast, Robert de Brus has lived in Scotland his whole life. He has spent it in the Scottish court, fighting for the interests of Scotland against the British and he raised his sons and grandsons, like myself, in the Scottish way.

We must support Robert de Bruce’s claim to the throne, and the later succession of the younger Robert de Bruce, if we should seek to preserve and protect Scotland. The only thing standing in his way is the claim of John Balliol, a puppet of King Edward. As a result, my brother and I are doing all that is within our power to shore up support for our grandfather against any threat that the King might wage upon Scotland through the coronation of so weak a monarch as John Balliol.

**Relations with the English**

Scotland and England have been in an uneasy peace for the past century, but it is obvious to any observer that the English have been attempting to insert themselves into Scottish affairs. Despite the alliance of our deceased King Alexander III to King Edward through his marriage to Princess Margaret of York, daughter of King Henry III of England[[8]](#footnote-7), King Edward has been trying to sway Scottish politics in his favour; he has gone so far as to claim suzerainty over Scotland and claim that he is Lord Paramount, although he can only base these claims on the fact the Alexander the Third paid homage to him although this was only for those lands held by Scottish lords[[9]](#footnote-8). King Edward’s end goal if for Scotland to become a vassal state to England, greatly diminishing the power of all Scottish lords and of the Scottish King. In such a situation, the Scottish way of life and government could well be abolished in favour of a system of government mimicking that of the British.

I believe that we should seek independence from England, despite my family’s ancestral holding of the English lands of Carrick. We should not allow King Edward to advise in our selection processes. He insists that if he should help us make such a decision as to our kingship, we would have to acknowledge him our feudal overlord. This is a concession which we cannot make. Not only would it put us at a distinct disadvantage as to our affairs with the English, not only would this be a humiliation to Scotland by giving it an English lord, but it would give a foreign king say over our government. He will doubtless choose a puppet monarch, one which he can exploit to the best interests of England without a care as to the affairs of Scotland and Scottish people.

**War with England**

We have seen how the English treat us, how they disregard our government, our history, and our leaders. If we must go to war, let us go to war for our lands, our people, and our way of life. However, we should try to avoid this if possible although not at all costs. We should not swear fealty nor allow the king to claim feudal lordship nor suzerainty. This must be done despite many lords’ divided loyalty to the king due to their holding of English earldoms. However, it would be beneficial to Scotland as a whole to keep England as an ally. If any measure can be taken to support the English throne, such as military support in rebellions that may occur in a similar fashion to the recent Baron’s Rebellion or the Welsh Rebellion, it should be taken to ensure English good will. This will not only protect Scotland as it must be noted that England has a stronger military force, but it will also protect the holdings of those lords possessing English titles.

To conclude, I believe that Robert de Bruce, Fifth Lord of Annandale is the rightful King of Scotland and that his claim should be supported over that of John Balliol. His claim is the strongest by blood and the strongest by loyalty to Scotland, in contrast to John Balliol whose claim is not only the weaker, but who is also strongly influenced by King Edward of England. We should not allow King Edward to arbitrate our selection of our next monarch in exchange for his claiming suzerainty over Scotland. We would be giving up our country pointlessly. We should attempt to bring stability to our nation peacefully, but we should be willing to go to war if that is what it takes to establish Scotland as a free and independent nation with a strong, Scottish king. I, Edward de Bruce, Earl of Carrick, hold that this is the path we as a nation should take to ensure a strong and independent Scotland in the future.

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