Scottish War of Independence: Scotland

Sir James Douglas

short line

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**Secondary Schools’ United Nations Symposium**

We gather here today to discuss a crisis of paramount importance: the future of our great Scotland. The death of Alexander III and his only heir, Margaret, has shocked and saddened the entire country and its denizens, myself, Sir James Douglas, included. However, we must push on through this dark time of upheaval to restore peace and forge a bright and free future for our beautiful country. We must also ensure a harmonious relationship with our neighbours, France and England. In order to establish said peace and prosperity for Scotland, we must elect a king who will justly serve our country and represent our values and independence on the world stage. This can only be achieved by one man: Alexander III’s second cousin and presumptive heir, Robert de Brus, 5th Lord of Annandale. Robert de Brus, also called Robert the Noble, not only holds rights to the Scottish Crown by virtue of blood relation and is clearly the most qualified person to assume the Throne, but also, importantly, he supports a symbiotic and amicable arrangement with our surrounding nations.

It can be proven beyond doubt that Robert de Brus is more closely related by blood to the Throne of the thirteen contenders making claims, including John Balliol. Robert de Brus is the great-great grandson of Scotland’s King David I. Furthermore, though both Robert de Brus and John Balliol have blood relation to David of Scotland, 8th Earl of Huntingdon, and younger brother of King William I the Lion, King of Scotland from 1165 to 1214,[[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2) Robert de Brus has a closer lineal right to the Throne: whereas John Balliol is a grandson of David’s oldest daughter, Robert de Brus is son to David’s middle daughter.[[3]](#footnote-3) This proves that, by blood, as grandson to David of Scotland, Robert de Brus holds the closer, stronger ties to the Scottish Throne than any other contender. Though it may be argued that, in the past, primogeniture has been the standard for choosing the heir to the Throne, we must look past this archaic tradition to pick the successor who is closest in relation to the Throne, based on blood, to ensure stability in this unsettled time.

In addition to blood relation, in extenuating circumstances such as these, we must look to to the ability and character of our candidates in solving this succession dispute. Many of the lords gathered here today may be deemed able to hold the Throne; however, Robert de Brus holds significantly more qualifications that make him the ideal candidate to rule. Robert de Brus is an accomplished leader, and has held several notable positions during his life, including Regent of Scotland. [[4]](#footnote-4) These positions have equipped him with the experience, skills, and knowledge of Scotland and our people needed to successfully and effectively rule this kingdom.

Not only does Robert de Brus have the blood ancestry and qualifications to assume the Throne, but he supports a peaceful Scotland. Peace is the only option to ensure a promising future for Scotland. Going to war would very likely result in the destruction of our country by powers such as England -- empires that have greater resources available for combat. The reign of Alexander III has left our country on peaceful ground with England, and laid the foundation for an auspicious future relationship. We must continue to work together in a non-violent manner, as Alexander III would wish. As with any relationship, we must nurture our friendship with England through respect, dialogue, and peaceful negotiation. To maintain this rapport, this non-violent connection, with England, we must choose a king who represents us, strengthens our independence, and advocates for peace. We wish for alliance with England, but not subservience. This man is Robert de Brus.

We cannot rely solely on our own future king and King Edward I of England to guarantee the promise of a harmonious future; they may be led astray, and prove unable to safeguard promises made. We must draft a full resolution signed by England and Scotland that ensures our independence from England, now and in the future. In developing this treaty, we must keep in mind that our goal is independence, but not isolation. Care must be taken to include clauses that support maintaining and enhancing our relations with our neighbours, England and France; it is an unavoidable consequence of their close proximity that they have influence on our country and its citizens.

Furthermore, we must not allow our neighbouring ruler, King Edward I, to take advantage of our country through his assistance here and position in moderating this meeting -- or, indeed, at any later time. In the early 12th Century, England’s King Richard I, ‘Richard the Lionheart’, freed us from subservience to England.[[5]](#footnote-5) We deserve the full freedom from England, as promised, with no strings attached. King Edward I has no right to demand suzerainty from our nation for this mere favour. Pledging homage to England is not the relationship we want, and we will not be exploited, controlled, or domineered by England. Accordingly, though peace is our primary goal, it is in our best interest to also plan for the worst eventuality, namely, war. Despite our valiant efforts, England may well betray us and the relationship we have developed. We may be forced to call for war, and we must be prepared.

Despite being a smaller nation, we do have the capability to earn our freedom from England through battle, if needed. As a united front, we form a strong, cohesive force that can prevail and earn our freedom. Remember, for example, at the Battle of Clitheroe in 1138, a group of Scots led by William fitz Duncan were victorious and the English were routed.[[6]](#footnote-6) Nonetheless, should English forces be stronger than expected, and Scotland proves unable to withstand England alone, our committee must be prepared to negotiate and form an alliance with France to secure success against the English. Such an alliance would strengthen our resources so that we may triumph against such an immense power, and win freedom for Scotland.

We have a fierce pride for our people and clans, our land, and our history. We will defend our country and its independence to the end. It is our duty, as citizens of Scotland, to select a just king who will serve our county for a better tomorrow. There is one man with rightful claim to the Crown of Scotland who will lead our nation to such greatness: Robert de Brus. Indeed, Robert de Brus personifies the leadership qualities described in the epic *Beowulf*: [[7]](#footnote-7)

when fighting starts

steadfast companions will stand by him

and hold the line. Behaviour that’s admired

is the path to power.

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