

The Shetland Report, Preface by Chairman, Lord Kilbrandon:

This Report, commissioned by the Shetland Islands Council, is presented by the Nevis Institute at a critical time. The Scotland Bill is at present before Parliament. If it comes into force as an Act, the system of government in Scotland will be radically altered. If the Bill is rejected, It is possible that at some future time other radical changes will be demanded and effected. On the assumption that the Bill passes, the people of the Shetland Islands will find themselves facing the question, what is the form of government which they wish to have? The answer to that question must depend on an examination by the people of possibilities (called Models in the Report) so that they can decide for themselves, after estimating the advantages and disadvantages of this Model and of that.

The Nevis Institute has been instructed to engage the services of well-known experts in every field in which, it has been agreed with the Council, such an examination of possibilities must proceed. These experts, and the Institute, are completely unbiased. They have no case to make in any of the subjects dealt with. The background material has been kept to a minimum, since the purpose of the Report is not to describe the Islands as they are, but to forecast practicabilities and possible consequences. Above all, the Report is not intended to, and does not, give advice or opinions on the desirability of any of the Models set up. That would be to usurp the responsibilities of the people of Shetland. I hope the Report contains matter which will help them in coming to a right conclusion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kilbrandon".

March 1978