

U DP153

Letter of James Kier Hardie

1906

Biographical Background:

James Keir Hardie was born in 1856 in Lanarkshire. His father was a ship's carpenter and trade unionist and his mother was in domestic service. He began work at the age of seven and by ten was working in a coal mine, rising to be a skilled hewer by the age of 22 years. He was involved in the temperance movement through which he met his wife, Lillie Wilson, whom he married in 1879.

After losing his job for his political beliefs he set up a stationer's shop and combined journalism with his efforts to organise the miners. He moved to Ayrshire in the 1880s where he continued this work and became secretary of the Scottish Miners' Federation in 1886. He continued to support himself through journalism and went on to become the first chairman of the Scottish Labour Party, the first independent labour political party in Great Britain.

He edited The Miner and then the Labour Leader and in 1893 he became the chairman of the Independent Labour Party. He was the first leader of the Labour Party in Parliament in 1906 and this letter is on House of Commons notepaper with its original cover, written in that year. The first world war was a shock to Hardie and his health broke down. He died on 6 September 1915 (Dictionary of National Biography).

Custodial history: Purchased 1970

Description: Letter from James Keir Hardie, House of Commons, to J Allanson Picton, Penmaenmawr, North Wales

Extent: 1 item

Related material:

Letter and postcard from James Kier Hardie, Cumnock, to J.E. Barlas, Dundee and Crieff, 1888 [Ref U DX78/5]

Papers of Lord Charles George Ammon and Lady Ada Ammon [Ref U DMN]

Other repositories:

National Library of Scotland; National Museum of Labour History; Scottish Record Office; Liverpool University; British Library of Political and Economic Science; Add MSS 43,915, 46,287, 50,538, British Library

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DP153/1	Letter from James Keir Hardie, House of Commons, to J Allanson Picton, Penmaenmawr, North Wales Has been out of London owing to sickness in family; letter from Sam Smith is quite in line with his attitude, 'he belongs to a previous generation'; and can forgive his maunderings but finds it less easy to overlook government's attitude towards the question and particularly such speeches as Lough's; 'I suppose the secular solution is now out of the question in our day and generation but it is bound to come all the same': Typescript, signed. 1p. 1 item	6 Jul 1906
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