

Sutherland decision—made on casting vote—goes for Government approval

No more senior

pupils at

Dornoch

County to concentrate all at Golspie

SUTHERLAND will have only one senior secondary school—at Golspie—if a decision made yesterday by Sutherland Education Committee is approved by the Scottish Education Department.

The decision was a close one. Twice the committee voted on it—and both times the result was 6-6. The casting vote of the chairman, Mr John H. Mackay, Melvich, was necessary to approve the motion.

At the moment Sutherland has two senior secondary schools—Golspie Senior Secondary School and Dornoch Academy. There are two hostels for pupils at Dornoch, but Golspie has only a girls' hostel. A hostel for boys is planned.

The Rev. William MacLeod, county convener and Provost of Dornoch, protested strongly against the proposal. He moved that they retain both senior secondary schools and said it would be "a radical mistake and retrograde step" to agree to only one such school for the county.

The transfer of senior pupils from Dornoch to Golspie could not take place without considerable difficulties, said Mr MacLeod.

'A danger'

"I think this proposal is going to endanger the future educational development of this county. I fear we are encroaching upon the parents' rights far too much. I fear this process of contraction will go on and touch other schools as well. I foresee that we shall have to go over again the whole business of new school building.

"This proposal is against the policy of the county council, who want to retain all the facilities we have. It would

be bad if we lost this pattern of education which has served us so well."

It was wrong that Dornoch, the county town, should not have a school from where children could go to university, he said.

Mr J. H. Mackay, who emphasised that he took sole responsibility for the proposal, said it would not be a matter of transferring say ninety pupils from Dornoch to Golspie as a high percentage of pupils concerned did not come from Dornoch at all.

Disservice

In any case, Golspie was the geographical centre of the east coast.

With the grave shortage in honours graduates, teaching appointments would be much more easily filled if they had one large senior secondary school.

Mr Mackay said they had not consulted parents when they took children away from the north coast to schools on the east coast.

"I feel we are not getting impartiality here in the interest of education over the next thirty or forty years. This proposal is not a brainstorm or a brainwave. If it is not carried out we will be doing a grave disservice to education in the county."

He maintained their building programme could be adjusted at once—there would be no hold-up. He was referring to plans to build new senior secondary departments at Dornoch and Golspie.

In three years

The Scottish Education Department had always stressed, said Mr Mackay, that one senior secondary school for the county was the logical sequence of what the education committee had been doing.

It was indicated during the debate that if the proposal went through the changeover would be effective in perhaps three years.

Footnote—In 1946 it was suggested that there should be only one senior secondary school for the county, but finally it was agreed there should be two.