

NO FORMAL CEREMONY AT RAIL CLOSURE

But Dornoch Turns Out To Say Sad Farewell To Little Train

ONE could hardly report that there was wailing and gnashing of teeth when Mr Tom Fraser, of Embo, drove the last train out of Dornoch railway station, at 1.15 last Saturday afternoon, but there was genuine sorrow that the end had come for this once popular branch line to The Mound. It was a pity, many thought, that there was no formal ceremony.

Mr George Sim, the stationmaster, was delighted to see the town turning out so solidly for the occasion. He reported that 183 passengers had bought tickets and he calculated that there would be upwards of 150 left on the platform to wave "farewell". Of course, the last run, actually, of locomotive No. 1646 was from The Mound to Dornoch later in the afternoon.

RAINY AFTERNOON

Appropriately enough, perhaps, it was a miserably wet afternoon, and indeed such were the conditions when this branch line was first opened on June 2, 1902. When the little train of three coaches returned from the Mound the passengers were fortunate, for there had been torrential rain just before they reached Dornoch, and then the weather cleared. Two extra coaches had been put on to meet the demand for seats. Naturally, it was an exciting day for those people who had also travelled on the first day of the line's opening. So far as one could gather there were six of them there last Saturday—Mrs W. M. Macdonald (Elmbank), Mrs Mary Macleod (Torrarroy), Miss Lilah Mackintosh, Miss Mary Ann Bridgeford, Mr Archie Sutherland and Mr George Sinclair.

Mrs Macdonald, who is 84, is a former treasurer of Dornoch Town Council. She regarded the closing of the branch line as the march of progress. She was determined to be "in on" the historic occasion last Saturday so that she could say she was there at the beginning and at the end.

Mrs Macleod, whose father was a director of the old Dornoch Light Railway, said: "We were so proud of our railway. It did so much to establish Dornoch as a prosperous seaside and golf resort, and so much for local trade. I just can't believe its usefulness is finished. It is a crying shame to see it allowed to die."

SHE WAS THERE

Mrs Macleod was proud of the fact that she had travelled on the very first train out of Dornoch on June 2, 1902—that was the one that carried all the officials. She was also at the cutting of the first sod when the venture was started.

Miss Bridgeford, who is 88, looked after the bookstall on Dornoch station for 20 years. A native of Dornoch, she lives at St Barr's. Her father was an inspector of police in Dornoch.

Mr Archie Sutherland, High Street.

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GUILDSWOMEN AT KINBRACE

"Echo Meeting"

ON Wednesday of last week—a beautiful June evening—Guildswomen from most parts of the Dornoch Presbyterial Council converged on Kinbrace for their Echo meeting.

There about 70 were most hospitably entertained by the ten keen and hard-working members of Kinbrace Guild, some of whom live up to eight miles from Kinbrace itself.

Mrs Mann, Golspie, presided, and the devotions were led by Mr Pallitt, an Aberdeen Divinity student, who is acting minister for part of the summer vacation. Kinbrace Guild president, Miss Mathieson, was at the organ of the crowded little church, and Miss Campbell gave the Bible reading.

Mrs Mann referred in sympathetic terms to the loss Kinbrace Guild and parish had suffered by the death of their minister, Mr Henderson.

At this Echo meeting, Mrs Mann said, it was of interest that the reports were being given by three council members who had all attended the General Assembly meetings for the first time.

Mrs Fulon (Dornoch) reported the Women's Foreign Mission Committee meeting, Mrs Carmichael (Dornoch) the Women's Jewish Committee meeting, and Mrs Rutherford (Golspie) the annual mass meeting, the Women's Home Mission meeting, and the meeting of the Women's Committee on Temperance and Morals (constituted by the General Assembly last year to replace the Temperance Committee).

The speakers were thanked by Mrs Gibson, Drummuir, while Mrs Mackinnon, Creich Manse, expressed the council's thanks to Kinbrace Guild.

Before tea, a small bring-and-buy sale was held in aid of Council funds. As a result of the sale and the collection at the meeting, over £20 was realised.

The next meeting, which will take place in Golspie on November 2, will be addressed by Mrs Hay, the new national president of the Woman's Guild.

Sent to Prison for Two Months

DONALD HUGH MACLEOD (39), fish merchant, Cruden House, Insherra, Kinlochbervie, was sentenced, at Dornoch Sheriff Court last Monday, to two months' imprisonment for driving a motor van at Rhian Bridge, on May 15 last, when he was under the influence of drink. He was also suspended from driving for five years. Accused, who had two previous convictions, the last in 1953, pleaded guilty.

Macleod had been reported for his driving, and a police patrol car set out to intercept him. He was stopped at Rhian Bridge, but the police said that unless they had been "alerted" they would never have suspected that he was under the influence of drink—he was driving in a regular manner, and at about 15 miles an hour.

Accused was reluctant to leave the van, it was stated, and when the police opened the driver's door, he almost fell out and was unsteady on his feet. He was taken to Lairg Police Station where he was certified by a doctor as unfit to drive.

Agent submitted that this was a borderline case.

"NOT PROVEN" VERDICT

A "not proven" verdict was returned at Dornoch Sheriff Court last Monday in a case in which an 18-year-old handyman was charged, under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, of having "unlawful and carnal relations", in July, 1959, with a girl who was at the time between 13 and 16 years of age. She gave birth to a child.

Accused denied the charge.

Dale's Part in Mod

(To the Editor, "Northern Times") Helmsdale, June 11.

SIR—In reading last week's issue of "The Northern Times," I noticed that a Helmsdale reader had written in praise of Mr A. M. Ross, Lochinver.

I, too, congratulate Mr Ross, but where on the whole of the east coast, during the past eight to nine years, has there been a harder working team than that from Helmsdale itself?

Due to the splendid work of Mrs Rapson, Mrs D. McAngus, and, until the past two years, Mrs Macpherson, Helmsdale has entered such people as Gladys Finlayson, the county's No. 1 singer, Marlene and Allison Rapson, Wilma Nicholson and many more no less worthy of praise.

May I add that out of 14 entries this year alone, 12 places were gained and the highest music mark of the Mod came to Helmsdale.

Please do not degrade the east coast children because they are not fluent Gaelic speakers, but give them en-



The last run from Dornoch to The Mound. Passengers getting on board at Dornoch train last Saturday.

POST OFFICE ENGINEER'S TERRIBLE ORDEAL

Fatal Accident Inquiry's Verdict

THE terrible ordeal of a 23-year-old Post Office engineer who was almost burned to death when his Landrover overturned and caught fire on the lonely Altnaharra-Hope road on December 16 last, was described at a fatal accident inquiry at Dornoch Sheriff Court last Tuesday.

The unfortunate man was Donald Bain Gray, who lived at Leith Walk, Wick, and who died in hospital in Golspie almost four months later, on April 6. He had been in lodgings in Tongue before the accident.

In a quiet, clear voice, Donald Sutherland, road foreman, of 6 Loyal Terrace, Tongue, told Sheriff-substitute D. V. Irvine Jones and a jury of five men and two women that he and two other roadmen were working on the Altnaharra-Hope road, when, about lunchtime, as they were watching an aeroplane overhead, their attention was attracted to a pall of smoke about two miles along the road.

NO DRIVER

"We at once put our tools in our vehicle and made for the spot," said Sutherland. "When we arrived we found a Landrover right across the road, upside down and in flames. We looked around for the driver, but we could not find him. There was clothing lying round the burning vehicle."

After dragging the Landrover off the road, they made another search for the driver, and later found him three miles away near Mudale. "He was in a very bad state, and all his clothing had been burned off him," added Sutherland. "At times he was walking, then running and falling. We took him to a house and summoned a doctor."

Mr B. S. Simpson, consultant surgeon at the Lawson Memorial Hospital, Golspie, described Gray's burns as the worst he had ever seen.

"In all my experience I have never seen worse burns than this boy had. In cases of burning as severe as this, death occurs within a few hours due to shock mainly."

Eighty per cent. of Gray's body had suffered second degree burns which had penetrated through the skin to the muscle tissues. Some parts had more severe third degree burns, said Mr Simpson.

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS

Gray's condition had been critical from his time of admission to hospital. "He managed to live on due to the shock being combated by blood transfusions."

James Mackay, lorry driver, 10 Loyal Terrace, Tongue, said that he and the road foreman remained at the house with Gray until medical aid came.

Constable William F. Cormack, Tongue, thought that the Landrover had skidded on the icy road, went up to the embankment, and toppled back on to the road. There was a bad bend there, he added.

"The only evidence as to how it happened was the version Gray gave. Mr James Glennie (35), assistant engineer, 12 Loch Street, Wick, during a hospital visit.

Said Mr Glennie: "He said he was approaching a left-hand bend near Mudale, and when he went to take it, the Landrover skidded. He corrected the skid but hit the verge and rebounded to the other side of the road and mounted the bank. The next he

knew the Landrover was upside down on the roadway. He said he was travelling about twenty miles an hour."

James Brown, mechanic in charge the post office garage at Lairg, said could not give any explanation as how the petrol in the tank had ignited as there was no possibility of pet getting out of the tank if the cap was securely fastened.

VERDICT

Without retiring, the jury came their verdict, that Gray had died "the result of a road accident in cou of his employment, when the Landrover he was driving skidded on frostbound stretch of the Altnaharra-Hope road, about four miles north Mudale, overturned and went on f. As a result Gray sustained sev. burning injuries, and remained in critical condition until his death."

SITUATIONS VACANT

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HOW BUS SERVICES WILL REPLACE TRAINS

"No New Arguments" To Justify Alterations To B.R. Reorganisation Plan

THE Mound-Dornoch branch railway line and the passenger station at Rogart will be closed, probably in April, and special bus services will be run to accommodate travellers.

That was announced last Friday after the Scottish Area Board of the British Transport Commission had finally rejected local authorities' pleas against closure and the reorganisation of rail services north of Inverness.

Inverness-shire Constituency Labour Party have put the whole matter before the Scottish Labour M.P.s, who are preparing a case for retention of these services, to be submitted to the House of Commons.

"UNASSAILABLE"
Meanwhile, Provost Robert Wotherpoon, of Inverness, who led the Highland protest deputation, deprecated the proposal to close Rogart and Beaulieu stations particularly. "An unassailable case was made out for both these stations to be left open," he said.

But he added, "A genuine attempt has been made to iron out our minor difficulties. There still remain the major

INVERNESS MEETING

A meeting of Highland local authority representatives was held at Inverness yesterday to discuss the implications of the British Transport Commission's reorganisation scheme for the railway north of Inverness.

ones. And if the major difficulties can be tackled in the same sympathetic way as the minor ones, then I am sure success will attend our efforts."

The area board's decision was conveyed in a letter from the chairman, Colonel D. H. Cameron of Lochiel, to Provost Wotherpoon.

"NO NEW ARGUMENTS"
"We decided no new arguments had been brought forward which would enable my area board to make any fundamental alterations to our proposals," Col. Cameron had written.

The board were most anxious to preserve the railway line north of Inverness and to provide long-distance passenger and freight services.

"It is fundamental to the success of this endeavour that the railways should concentrate on the long-distance services and leave the buses to provide for the short-distance and intermediate journeys. I know this will require careful road-rail co-ordination."

Col. Cameron said it would take six weeks to complete the necessary arrangements to implement the scheme, and it would not be put into operation before the end of March at the earliest.

A decentralised traffic organisation was being set up.

CO-ORDINATION
The railway traffic manager for the northern division, with his headquarters at Inverness, would have considerable responsibility for seeing that rail services in his area met the requirements of the travelling and trading public.

Both he and the general manager in Inverness for Highland Omnibuses, Ltd., would co-ordinate to ensure the best possible service.

Highland Omnibuses had already given an assurance that steps would be taken to see that any additional duplication required on existing journeys would be fully provided.

"I believe," said Colonel Cameron, "that given a fair trial, the scheme will provide a reasonable transport facilities. Its detailed working will be kept under constant review both by road and rail interests."

A spokesman for Highland Omnibuses said no fares increases were contemplated so far as normal additional bus services were concerned.

"If any new services are to be provided the question of fares will have to be discussed with the Traffic Commissioners."

ROAD SERVICE PLANS
The following are the modifications and new plans for Highland Omnibus Services proposed to go into operation when the railway economy plans take effect:—

At Inverness, improved connections for passengers will be made between rail and bus stations.

Buses will be on Platform 6 at the railway station to meet trains from the South. Similarly, buses from the North will set down passengers on Platform 6 to make connections with south trains.

ROGART
In order to provide a better connection for Inverness in the forenoons, Highland Omnibuses will vary their departure time from Golspie and Rogart on Monday, Tuesday and Friday forenoons to provide an arrival at Lairg at 12.5 p.m. in order to effect a connection at Lairg station with the 12.35 p.m. south train.

Highland Omnibuses will also arrange bus services on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays for passengers wishing to get to Rogart from Lairg following the arrivals of the last trains from both the North and South at 6.53 p.m. and 6.51 p.m. This service will leave Lairg at approximately 7 p.m. and make the journey to Rogart and Golspie and return to Lairg.

When Dornoch branch line is closed, bus services will be run from Dornoch for people living in and around Embo.

"This timetable," states Col. Cameron, "although highly unprofitable, represents a considerable improvement on the existing services so far as Dornoch and Embo are concerned."

INVERNESS-DORNOCH
"I would also state that Highland Omnibuses will vary their Inverness/Dornoch service in order to effect a connection at Bonar-Bridge station for Dornoch with the 4.35 p.m. train from Inverness arriving at Bonar-Bridge at 6.20 p.m."

"The existing Inverness/Golspie road services provide a reasonable alternative for passengers travelling in both directions between Cambusavie and Skelbo."

After the withdrawal of the evening trains between Inverness and Tain, a bus will run each night from Monday to Saturday between these centres.

This service will connect with trains arriving in Inverness from the South. In the reverse direction there will be an additional bus service.

Steps will be taken to see that any additional duplication to existing bus journeys which may be required will be fully provided.

Colonel Cameron also said in his letter that he would ensure that adequate carage facilities were provided at Muir of Ord and Bonar-Bridge to deal with the freight traffic arising on the Fortrose and Dornoch branches.

Married Women in Offices

MR J. H. MACKAY, Melvich, told Sutherland County Council last week "to be careful"—the youth employment officer in Wick had repeatedly been making representations about young girls not being able to get work in offices which were often "filled up with married women."

The council were considering an application from a shorthand typist in their employment who wanted one week's leave of absence to be married and asking permission to continue her work on a temporary basis. It was stated that her future husband was going on national service.

Under the circumstances it was agreed that the request be granted, but that the case be reviewed in six months' time.

LICENCE OFFENCES

Mrs Marina Sutherland, 17 Victoria Crescent, Brora, was fined £5 at Dornoch Sheriff Court last Tuesday for operating a television set without a licence between July 31 and November 28, 1959. Mrs Jessie Gilbert, 2 Church Street, Golspie, was fined £2 for using a wireless set without a licence during the same period.

Praise for Helmsdale Firefighters

A HELMSDALE seine net boat, the have been much more earlier. The fire-

STATION CLOSURE IN NORTH

"Very Severe Blow," Says County Convener

"I THINK we have suffered a very severe blow from the Government through the British Transport Commission," commented the Rev. William MacLeod, convener of Sutherland and provost of Dornoch, last Friday, on the decision to reject the pleas of local authorities that certain branch railway lines and stations north of Inverness should be saved from closure.

"It is obvious, so far as the Highlands are concerned, that any nationalised undertaking must become attenuated if it is based on economic necessity."

"On the other hand, a nationalised undertaking, in my way of thinking, should be a social service supported by the Government so that every part of the country, whether poor or rich, may have the same services. I do not think we shall get any betterment in the Highlands, so far as transport and other nationalised services are concerned, until these are regarded as social services and not revenue-producing services."

"Now the Government have come down on the side of economy so that we shall suffer considerably." The same would happen with the buses later on, added Mr MacLeod.

PROTEST MEETING

Mr G. M. Murray, Morvich, who is a member of Sutherland County Council, said he was going to call a protest meeting, Rogart would be the worst placed of all. "I do not see why we should lie down to this. We in the Highlands are chucked about any old way to suit the whim of some bureaucrat. I do not think the British Transport Commission listened to our case at all."

The bus service proposed for Rogart was "ridiculous" in offering a service to connect with the trains at Lairg on three days a week. "What about the other three days?" asked Mr Murray. And what kind of postal service were they going to get now if the mail train did not stop at Rogart.

But he was most seriously concerned by the fact that no representative north of Inverness was on the Transport Users' Consultative Committee. His impression was that they had been conveniently left out of it just now.

"At this situation was all the more ridiculous at this time when Rogart was trying to play its part in the Fraser tourist development plan for the Highlands. Rogart came within the Bonar-Bridge experimental area. "We are being asked to provide more facilities for visitors and yet our railway station is being taken away from us. It's fantastic. One side is fighting against the other."

He had always understood that nationalisation meant fair shares for all. It was "scandalous" the way the whole north of Scotland had been treated.

REDUNDANT?
One hundred and twenty Highland railwaymen will lose their jobs, according to Councillor Mackenzie, Inverness. Twenty-three of them will be offered alternative railway positions in the area but the remaining 97 will become redundant and will have to find jobs in other regions or outside the railway altogether.

Councillor Mackenzie, a railway guard and secretary of the Inverness No. 1 branch of the N.U.R., said that there would be joint consultations in Glasgow between the management and staff representatives to negotiate the treatment of the redundant men.

Himself a member of the Highland deputation which has led the protest against the closures, Councillor Mackenzie said: "It is a pretty poor show. The British Transport Commission are not concerned with offering a public service; they are out to make an economy drive and the best way they think they can achieve it is by reducing staff."

REORGANISATION
This is how British Railways' reorganisation will affect the North.

The passenger and freight service at Fouls and Bilbeter on the main North line is to cease entirely. At Delyn, The Mound, Loth, Halkirk and Bower the passenger service is to cease and all five stations will lose their freight handling staff and be reduced to the status of unstaffed public sidings.

Rogart is one of 13 stations on the main line at which the passenger service will be withdrawn. The others are Bunchrew, Lentrann, Clunes, Beaulieu, Muir of Ord, Conon, Evanton, Alesna, Kildary, Nigg, Edertown, and Watten.

On the branch line from The Mound to Dornoch stations to be closed both to passenger and freight are—Cambusavie Halt, Skelbo, Embo and Dornoch.

MOTHER AND SON BURIED TO DEATH AT TALMIN

Trapped in Bed in Croft House At Neighbours' Desperate Rescue

LAST Sunday was a black day for Sutherland. At Midtown, Talmine, Melness, a mother and her 10-year-old son were buried to death when fire completely destroyed a tarred felt roof crofter's cottage, and a 31-year-old Englishman lost his life when he went over a precipice and fell about 1000ft. while glissading down the steep slopes of Ben Hope.

The woman and her son were Jessie Mackay, daughter of Mr Robert Mackay, Kyleview, and Robert John, a pupil at Melness School. They were

trapped in a attic of this wooden partitioned five-roomed cottage, and when the alarm was raised they were trapped in the inferno.

More fortunate were Mr Mackay, who is 59, his married daughter, Mrs Rena Mackenzie, and her two children, George (6) and Anne (8). They managed to stagger out of the blazing building, but they were in a hysterical state and had to have medical attention.

It is understood that the fire was caused by an oil stove.

GALLANT BID
First to raise the alarm was 30-year-old Mr John MacLeod, an employee of Alexander Sutherland, Ltd., Thurso, who was home for the week-end.

He told a reporter: "I was sitting with a friend in my car outside my house about 2.30 a.m. when I saw flames coming through the windows of the Mackays' home."

"We rushed down and saw Mr Mackay staggering out. Mrs Mackenzie and her two children had no clothes on at all. They were demented."

"Half the lower part of the house was an inferno. I rushed in and got halfway upstairs but dense smoke drove me back."

"Flames from the blazing scullery were shooting up through the house. I went out, soaked a coat in water and tried to get upstairs again."

"I was halfway up when the wooden staircase burst into flames. It began to cave in and I just had time to leap down. I was burnt about my legs and my hair was singed."

ROOF CAVED IN
"I ran to a phone and called the police and ambulance. Then I went back again. My friend, John Mackay, my brother-in-law James Watt from Thurso, and I got a ladder and went on to the roof."

"With a hammer we started trying to bash our way in that way. But as soon as we made a hole flames shot through. Then the roof caved in. We were lucky not to fall right into the blaze."

"It was terrible. We felt so helpless."

And Mr Mackay, his daughter children were wandering a terical, with people trying to walking blindly back into it.

"When the roof caved in house was destroyed."

Still shocked and under me tion Mr Mackay said: "I got a drop of tea. I left the oil ing in the scullery and w to the kitchen."

"When I got back the scul fire right up to the ceiling put it out. I just couldn't sto

"I woke Rena and the ct were sleeping downstairs, got up to wake Jessie and the flames and smoke beat

Within an hour the fire itself out. And Mrs Mack son were found lying side l bed in the tiny charred att

Mr Mackay was given s neighbour, while Mrs Mar her children went to the l uncle, Mr George Mackay.

FUNERAL SERVICE
The remains of the two v taken to Melness Church a and on Tuesday there w there, before the funeral, c the Rev. F. Macdonald. The said by Mr C. Birnie, the

Melness school children teachers were among the c The service was both in Gaelic.

It was a very, very impre (writes a correspondent). I mourners were openly weep was pathetic to watch Ro classmates sitting there so

The funeral was the chief met when among the Melness Robert Mackay, Rena Mack Mackay (Newcastle), Geor (Kinnett), Murdo Macles (Bridge), T. Mackay and (Tongue). It was the larg seen in the district for ma

Among the floral trib wreaths from Robert John's classmates and teachers on Sunday School.

NO FIRE BRIG
Since the fire, people in district have been talking laud a fire-fighting equip although it is admitted th there had been a local bri time it had got to the so latest outbreak it would formidable task quelling th

"But," one resident Northern Times, "that doe we should not have such Firemen set out for us from this occasion, but that mea of 12 miles which involves time."

"There is a water main way through here, but ther nection anywhere in the fire hose, not from one district to the other. If we local brigade it would have been too late to save life e the blaze. But you never

And on Wednesday night Macdonald told our repor was going to raise this m first meeting of the district

CLIMBER'S BODY RECOVERED FROM MOUNTAIN GULL

THIRTY searchers, including police, gamekeepers and shepherds, had the grim task last Monday morning of recovering the body of Mr Gerald V. Massey, the physicist from Dounreay atomic station, who lost his life while glissading on the slopes of Ben Hope, the previous afternoon.

The body of Mr Massey, a 31-year-old bachelor from Warrington, Lancashire, was found in a deep hole about 1800 feet up the ben.

An ice axe, left by his two companions, Kenneth Brindley, Howburn Road, Thurso, and James McEish, Ormie Lodge Hotel, marked the spot where the death fall had begun.

One of the party, Mr Peter Stewart, who works at Altnaharra Hotel, said the search party took three hours of hard climbing to reach the spot. There was not much snow on the mountain, but deep wreaths in the gullies.

"It was on one of these wreaths," said Mr Stewart, "about three-quarters-way up, that the three men started the fatal slide. Mr Massey apparently lost control when he allowed the ice axe to slip from his grasp. He must have been flying like a rocket."

where Mr Massey lived, to a concerted course of act the Cairnness Mountaineers the local party organised police.

The body was known to between frozen snow and th and skilled mountaineering would be required to carry rescue operation.

Late telephone calls rendezvous between the and the mountaineering cl at a byre just south of the Hope, at 7.30 on Monday m

The Thurso party left at r reached the byre almost s with the other party of p shepherds, gamekeepers a The party, 30 strong, com numbers of Thurso and Sull They lost no time in the as rough terrain to the base gully at a level of about 1

The skilled mountaineers then approached the body with ice axes footholds. frozen snow across the e proved a difficult operatio the victim and transfer hi position on the grassy slope total time required being o

LITTLE HOPE FOR THESE BRANCH RAILWAYS

will be known

IF the British Transport Commission were going to apply the rigid principle of economics then there was no escape from the ultimate closure of the whole railway line from Inverness to Wick, the Rev. William MacLeod, convener of Sutherland and provost of Dornoch, said last Friday, when he was commenting on a statement made the previous day at Inverness by Cameron of Lochiel, chairman of the commission's Scottish Area Board. Lochiel had suggested to a Highland local authority protest deputation that if certain branch lines and stations north of Inverness were not closed the whole line from Inverness to Wick might yet be threatened.

It was the way in which the Commission looked at it, added Mr MacLeod, the best policy for Sutherland County Council was to leave alone any road projects they had in connection with the railways. Mr MacLeod was referring to the council's major scheme to build an overline bridge at Strathleven, on the trunk road between Golspie and Brora, which has been advertised for tender, and to an underline bridge which it is proposed to build at Golf Road level crossing, Brora.

"The County Council should hesitate to spend any more money on such projects until this whole matter is finalised," said Mr MacLeod. The Government, incidentally, were contributing substantially to both these works.

It was apparent what the attitude was to be to these small branch lines, such as the Mound-Dornoch line, and so people could assume there was something behind the threat to close the whole line from Inverness to Wick.

Mr MacLeod recalled that some time ago he had warned Sutherland County Council that the threat to small branch lines was "the thin edge of the wedge." He had stated that unless they took prompt action they would have no rail-

way north of Inverness. Mr J. P. Whittet, Clashmore, a member of Sutherland County Council, who was on the Inverness deputation, said last Friday that it was all wrong that there should have been only two members of the area board at the meeting while there were so many officials.

"I was extremely dissatisfied with the meeting. I do not think these officials should have been there at all. It is the officials who are running this business. I think this area board and the Transport Users Consultative Committee are only the facade to allow these officials to dictate what is to be done."

While he did not think there was any immediate intention to close the main line, that might come in time. "You never know when the axe is going to fall," added Mr Whittet.

The British Transport Commission were trying "to push this local railway traffic on to the buses, but he did not think officials should be running this business. We maintain that if the railway went over to diesel they would reduce their losses."

"CUT AND DRIED"

Mr G. M. Morrison, Bonar-Bridge, who was representing Dornoch and Creich District Council on the deputation to Inverness, last Friday said he felt that they had got a patient hearing "because of the bad treatment" they had had when they went to meet the Minister of Transport in London, but in the event everything was already "cut and dried" and the commission's minds were "already made up."

But Mr Morrison thought the commission might have second thoughts about the plan to close the passenger service at Rogart station, although that was only his own impression.

Personally, he was very disappointed that the Scottish Tourist Board representative at the meeting had said nothing to back up what Mr William Nicholson, the board's manager, had said at the meeting with the Minister of Transport. Then Mr Nicholson had said that it was very important, from the tourist angle, that no action should be taken just now to close these branch lines. "That was not mentioned yesterday," added Mr Morrison. "My own impression is that the Tourist Board were asked to soft pedal on this."

Mr J. C. Macdonald, who was representing Dornoch Town Council, said he would be reporting to the council. But his impression was that the branch lines were going to be closed. The area board's hands seemed to be tied, he added.

GLASGOW MEETING

Now the whole area board are to meet in Glasgow next Wednesday to give their final decision.

Cameron of Lochiel had told the Highland local authority deputation that the plan to close the branch lines and stations had been designed in order to preserve the main line.

A statement issued after the meeting indicated that Lochiel would report everything that was said at the meeting to the full Scottish Area Board. It would take six weeks to implement any decision that was made.

Lochiel had attached special importance to the fostering and improving of road and rail co-ordination, the statement added.

Along with Lochiel were Mr Donachy, area board deputy chairman and member of the B.T.C.; Mr James Ness, general manager, Scottish Region, British Railways; Mr James Amos, chairman and director of Scottish Omnibuses, Ltd.; Mr A. Yeaman, traffic manager, British Railways Northern Division; and other officials of the B.T.C.

Before the meeting, the Highland deputation, who were led by Provost Robert Wotherspoon of Inverness, had talks between themselves lasting nearly an hour.

The meeting, which was held in private, lasted for three hours, and afterwards "a complete fiasco" was a wasted afternoon - no better than our meeting with Marples, were some of the comments from the deputation.

The deputation, still smarting over the cold reception they got from Mr Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, have been told by Sir Brian Robertson, chairman of the British Transport Commission, that the area board have full powers to reach a decision on this matter.

But from remarks passed by some of the Highland representatives later, there seems little hope of the area board scrapping the closure plan.

RAILWAYMAN'S VIEW

Mr Donald Mackenzie, an Inverness town councillor, himself a railwayman, said, "I pointed out that the commission had only recently appointed a traffic manager for the North and they were

FROM OUR OLD FILES

50 YEARS AGO

BECAUSE of a snowstorm the presiding officers at the General Election in the county had to travel on horseback and by cart to many of the polling stations, we reported in our issue of January 20, 1910. There was "great excitement" when it was announced that A. C. Morton (L.) had a majority of 656 over Lochiel (U.)—1607-951.

"In our 'Funny Man's' column" it was stated that Brora was "again measured" for a new harbour, and that "rather a curious incident happened in preliminary at the site." The Commission, the article states, had forgotten their measuring instruments; and it was decided to ask Mr John Ross, draper, for his yard-stick, but as Mr Ross had been in contact with the Highland Railway Company at the time about their high freight charges, he was not available. Eventually, the site was measured with two-foot rule carried by Mr A. Sutherland, one of the commissioners.

It was reported at the annual soiree of Helmsdale Free Church Sabbath School that there were 103 pupils on the roll. Five first class, three second class and two third class certificates were obtained in the Welfare of Youth examination.

Mr David Melville, Golspie, was appointed chairman of Sutherland Combination Poorhouse, Bonar-Bridge.

Brora and Golspie Free Church congregations signed a unanimous call to the Rev. D. Munro, Ferintosh.

At the annual gathering of the Edinburgh Sutherland Association it was reported that their total funds amounted to £112.

25 YEARS AGO

THERE were 28 births, 12 marriages and 27 deaths in the Parish of Clyne in 1934, we reported in our issue of January 17, 1935.

On leaving Halladale to become teacher at Arnpoll, Miss J. Macrae received a number of public presentations.

The accounts of Sutherland Nursing Association showed a credit balance of £187.

Twelve teams entered for the preliminary drama festival at Dornoch.

Helmsdale United won the Couper Cup when they defeated Golspie Sutherland 5-1 in the final at Helmsdale. Our report states that the "Dale attack" were ably led by A. Pettigrew.

A number of young Bonar-Bridge pipers were making good progress under their tutor, Pipe-Major A. Ross. Chrysanthemums "of abnormal size and beauty" were in bloom at Gledfield, Ardgay.

What's in a Name?

MR A. SUTHERLAND, Lairg, suggested to Sutherland County Council recently that the new designation for Mr D. R. Fasham—county engineer (as well as planning officer)—might be confusing. He wondered if it should not be county water and drainage engineer. There was engineering work to be done on road schemes. Did A. Fasham's title include road engineering?

Mr A. J. Macrae, clerk—That is the work of the road surveyor (Mr W. Sutherland).

Mr G. M'iver, Brora, said he would agree with Mr A. Sutherland up to a point. The term "county engineer" might lead to confusion in some people's minds. "It might be interpreted as the man who is responsible not only for water and drainage but for roads."

Major J. H. Weir, Golspie—Although Mr Fasham is appointed county engineer that does not mean he is senior to the road surveyor or architect?

Mr Macrae—There is no seniority.

Major Weir—In Inverness there is. Mr Macrae—I know it is quite common elsewhere to designate the water and drainage engineer as county engineer—and the road surveyor as the road engineer, if you like.

Mr M'iver—Well, I accept that.

SCHOOL PLANS

Draft plans of Golspie's new senior secondary school are being submitted to the Scottish Education Department for their approval. Once the Department's reaction is received the final plans will go before Sutherland Planning Committee and the County Council.

This Guide Should Boost Assynt

ASSYNT Amenities Association are to be complimented for the illustrated guide being in the district which they recently issued. It is compiled and edited by Mr Norman Macaskill, the local district clerk, and should do much to boost this magnificent part of Sutherland.

In a foreword Lord Forbes, former

HOW ARMY CADET FORCE WERE BORN—1

259

Woman's Part 100 Years Ago

CADET training seeks to develop a boy's own personality and character so that he grows into a useful member of the adult community, but, more, since the training is based on the military model, we produce a good citizen, who, in the words of the last cadet regulations, when he puts on the Queen's uniform, becomes the good British soldier."

In actual practice, of course, those boys who have any inclinations to a military career, or who come from homes with a regimental background, are the ones that gravitate to the cadet force in preference to other youth organisations and the result of cadet training must be that interest in things military are aroused and boys may elect to make the army their career.

But why did the cadet forces start in 1860? Or rather, why did the present conception of cadet forces as we now know them start in that year? The occasion will produce the man or the movement. So it was with the cadet forces.

TWO MAJOR ROOTS

If the cadet forces are a blending of child-care and military training we should expect to find two major roots

THE Army Cadet Force celebrate their centenary this year and all over the country detachments are preparing special schemes to mark the occasion.

It is natural that this splendid youth organisation are hoping for more recruits than ever this year and the Sutherland company are no exception.

Parents should note that this is not purely a military organisation, although discipline must remain essentially one of its virtues, and no boy is the worse of that. Curiously enough, as the accompanying article shows, it was a woman who was responsible for the beginnings of the movement.

to our plant, and this is, indeed, exactly what we do find. Both military and social forces were at work.

Let us, then, consider the soil in which the plant seeded and first grew. By 1860 the industrial revolution was well established. Britain had grown prosperous. Manufacture and trade had developed and real wealth had increased enormously. Yet the process of converting the country from agriculture to industry had brought misery as well as success. The early developers had had little thought for the social changes which they had incurred. The rapid growth of urbanisation had produced slums, and mass-exploitation, and the forces of religion and education had been unable to cope with the sudden demands made upon them.

But by 1860 the Victorian conscience had awakened and already many thinkers had striven in the cause of reform. Especially was this so in the case of children. It was a time of liberalism both in politics and thought. New ideas were constantly being promulgated and often accepted. Many of the services which we now accept unthinkingly as part of the welfare state in which we live, had their origins in the voluntary efforts of unselfish men and women in this period.

MISS OCTAVIA HILL

Among the reformers was Miss Octavia Hill. Her name will always be associated with slum clearance and the building of decent homes for the poor. Her experiences in East London led her to the conclusion that it was not enough just to educate or rebuke the adults of the next generation, must be given standards of cleanliness and decent behaviour.

She surveyed the urchins of London and decided that a little discipline would be the best way to start. So she collected helpers and started a band of boys who modelled themselves on the Army. That small seed grew to a cadet battalion which exists to this day.

Here then is the first root—the desire to help boys — bedded deep in the sociological conditions of the nineteenth century.

What about the military aspect? Again, let us look at conditions of 1860. The country was very prosperous and recruiting fell away badly. It recovered

in the depression of 1876 but that irrelevant to our story.

The army therefore was small, the service was unattractive, yet national need for the armed forces was considerable. At that time Britain, common with the other nations of Europe, feared the rise of France. Memories of Waterloo were not so far distant (only 45 years before) and France had emerged victorious from the wars of the Italian Liberal. Would Napoleon III prove to be another Bonaparte?

VERY REAL DANGER

Whether the question seems rhetorical or not to us, it was very real to grandfathers. That was the time when so many forts were built on the So Coast which to-day make camp ground for the A.C.F. The dangers were real and the army was small. Moreover, following the traditions of British military thought, the army was service overseas, it was not geared for defence. As always, when in Britain called upon her citizens here the middle classes responded wholeheartedly. They might not be so regular soldiers but they are more than ready to be citizen-soldiers.

In 1859 the Secretary of State wrote to all Lords-Lieutenant asking them to form volunteer battalions. The formation of any militia or volunteer corps was certain to be 100 per cent successful (a phenomenon repeated when L.D.V. was formed in 1940). Young men came forward in their hundreds. It was a time of intense national pride. This was coupled with a proud patriotism. Service for the country was just a slogan it was a reality. So Britain responded to the call made on her power.

These volunteer units had much in common with the later Territorial Army. They were both officered and manned by men of similar social backgrounds. Money was available, indeed much from public sources from private funds. There was a variety of uniforms, often at personal expense, and we may be certain the spirit more than made up for deficiencies in actual training, though the latter was taken seriously into account.

BOYS EAGER TO JOIN

Given the national danger, the intense patriotic urge, and the general excitement, it is any wonder that the wished to join up with their brothers? Is it any wonder that militia formation, filled with the camaraderie of neighbours and with a sense of high adventure, should collect younger brothers, put them into uniform and let them drill to their content?

That is precisely what happened throughout the country one finds junior volunteer forces coming into being almost simultaneously, owed central direction to no one, their uniforms were varied. Some doubtless short lived and many doubtfully vanished when the Franco Prussian war passed with the Prussian war of 1870.

Many survived and some of existing A.C.F. units can trace their origins away back to these early days. More, doubtless, could do so if they existed. Alas, the spirit of adventure and enthusiasm does not take kind pen and ink and few records of early days have survived.

SCHOOLS' LEAD

Since each cadet unit was entirely dependent for what we now call administration on its parent body are no central records, only the independent on diaries, registers and lists and private letters. To document true history of those early years require a great deal of patient research—far more, alas, than the writer can present afford.

It hardly needs to be said that those days of national emergency emotion the schools could not do the needs of youth. When the Territorial Army was formed in 1859 it is a certain that many school masters would have offered their services, but so the leading public schools at sought permission to form Volu Corps of their own.

So far as we know at present earliest were Eton, Harrow, Rossall, Felsted, Hurstpierpoint, Cheltenham and Tonbridge. These became the school-cadet corps as now known them, but they then were part of the Volunteer Force and would have been operations on the occasion arisen.

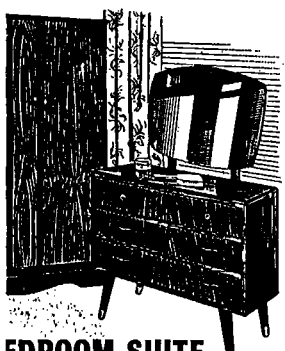
So we find our second root—this embedded in the military needs of a community.

(To be continued.)

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But from remarks passed by some of the Highland representatives later, there seems little hope of the area board scrapping the closure plan.

RAILWAYMAN'S VIEW

Mr Donald Mackenzie, an Inverness town councillor, himself a railwayman, said, "I pointed out that the commission had only recently appointed a traffic manager for the North and they were not giving him the chance to operate a proper service.

"We estimate that the proposed closures will save the commission about £20,000 a year. In all the meetings we have had, not one of them has contradicted that figure. If they really went out to get traffic and introduced special rates, they could get back their £20,000 in a matter of weeks. We are far from satisfied with to-day's meeting."

"It was almost a wasted afternoon," Mr R. Macleod, Dingwall town councillor, said. "What we want now is for the Highland M.P.s to raise the whole matter from the floor of the House of Commons and let the Prime Minister know what the people in the Highlands want. I for one am prepared to fight this thing the whole way."

Star Window Motor Display Boosts North

THE Ford Motor Company of Dagenham have instituted a window display trophy competition among their main distributors throughout the British Isles, the best display being chosen from Scotland, London, South-West England and South Wales, the Midlands, Northern England and Northern Ireland.

Taylor's of Invergordon Ltd. have won this competition with their window display entitled "Stars of the Ford Galaxy." They have constructed a background showing the night sky with the various stars and a constellation pictorially represented, and in the foreground stand the latest Ford models from Dagenham.

The display was designed and executed by Mr. I. L. Campbell, the county

Mr Macrae—I know it is quite common elsewhere to designate the water and drainage engineer as county engineer—and the road surveyor as the road engineer, if you like.

Mr M'Iver—Well, I accept that.

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In a foreword Lord Forbes, former Minister of State for Scottish Affairs, who refers to the growing importance of the tourist industry, congratulates the association "on the imagination and initiative which they have shown in producing it."

Lord Forbes adds, "It is always exciting to be able to plan a holiday ahead and this is exactly what this guide enables one to do. The district of Assynt has always been well known for its scenic grandeur and it has also very many attractions which combine to make a perfect holiday."

And that is apparent when one reads the text and studies the many fine photographs. As Mr John Milne, chairman of the district council, says in an introduction, Assynt "is an artist's paradise." And he adds, "The lovely

She surveyed the urchins of London, and decided that a little discipline would be the best way to start. So she collected helpers and started a band of boys who modelled themselves on the Army. That small seed grew to a cadet battalion which exists to this day.

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What about the military aspect? Again, let us look at conditions of 1860.

The country was very prosperous and recruiting fell away badly. It recovered

sands of Achmelvich, Clachtoll and Clashnessie are the happy playgrounds of an ever-increasing number of summer visitors." And mountain climbers find a challenge in such peaks of awe-some sounding names as Quinag, Canisp, Cul Mor, Sulven and Ben More Assynt. The guide is profusely illustrated and set off with informative articles, and there are several pages of general information at the back.

The coloured frontispiece showing the peaks of Quinag and Kylesku Ferry will be treasured by many and should be an incentive to those who have never visited this majestic part of Sutherland to make good the omission. The price of the guide is 2/-.

The Department of Health for Scotland have approved of a piped water supply scheme for Rosehall and Invershin, it was intimated at a meeting of Sutherland County Council recently. The rate of grant was not given.

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N.F.U. LEADERS "ACCUSED"

A.P. Action Was "12 Months Too Late"

The leaders of the National Farmers' Union of Scotland accused recently of being "12 months too late" in taking action against the Government's proposed "Marginal Agricultural Production Grants".

The occasion was a meeting, in Lanarkshire, of the Scottish Peat and Development Association, and Captain Ben Coutts, factor to Mr. Noel Noble, M.P. for North Argyll, who said that M.A.P. in its old form was "12 months too late, not just a few weeks ago." "It is a sad fact that the only way to fight against the Government's plans 12 months too late," he added, "whatever other grants we get in the Highlands we will never get a grant which has done more good than M.A.P."

He has been inclined to think that inefficient farmers should be "weeded out" by subsidies. This would be "done in any other industry. The union has been too ready to shout 'wolf.' The future of our industry is to rely much more on capital investment than on hand-out grants," he said.

PLOUGHING GRANTS

The time has come when inefficiency cannot be tolerated in the industry—and that goes for the N.F.U. as well," declared Colonel Michael Keith. "It is crazy that they allow M.A.P. to be cut. The cut should have been in one of the 'blanket' grants as that for ploughing."

Woodburn, a former Secretary for Scotland, said he had to "stick to this view. The N.F.U. had only been alive to the M.A.P. issue after it had passed through Parliament and become an accomplished fact. Agitation is too late."

G. Dunlop (Newton Stewart) insisted to defend Union policy and resist to the bitter fight its leaders had set up to safeguard the grants.

Woodburn had been questioning general agricultural policy and his own position on the situation. "We are in the process of becoming European," he said. "The Government and the country are turning away from supporting agriculture as they did and it is a frosty wind blowing."

Captain Coutts said he thought subsidies were not intended to keep the inefficient farmers in business. "I agree here is a much colder blast blowing and in the future there will be fewer straight handouts and more improvement grants."

Whatever grants we may get in the future," said Captain Coutts, "we will never get one as good as M.A.P. I think the people who were getting it at the time realised how much it was doing for them. It was a very thoughtful out plan with no possibility of waste and always something to show for it."

N.F.U. Statement

National Farmers' Union of Scotland have come out with strong support for branches, particularly in the Highlands who have complained about the lack of Marginal Aid Production Grants by Agricultural Executive Councils.

RENEWED HOPE FOR DORNOCH LINE

Highland Fund Intervenes to Suggest "Taking Over" from B.T.C.

THE Rev. William MacLeod, convenor of Sutherland and province of Dornoch, expressed himself as "very hopeful" when he was commenting last Friday on the statement by Mr. J. M. Rollo, chairman of the Highland Fund, that the Fund were interested in keeping open the eight-mile Dornoch to Mound branch railway line threatened with closure by the British Transport Commission.

Mr. Rollo had said in Glasgow the previous day that the Fund might run this line themselves if their negotiations with B.T.C. were not a success. And he advocated the use of small diesel coaches.

"If British Railways are going to close this line," said Mr. MacLeod, "it would be very strange if they refused the Highland Fund offer to keep it open on their own account. When the coal pits were nationalised and the Coal Board threatened to close down the little mine at Brora, that did not prevent Sir David Robertson, M.P., from stepping in and keeping it going. The fact that this was a nationalised industry did not prevent the Brora mine from functioning independently."

CASE IN WALES

It was too early to be optimistic about the Dornoch line, continued Mr. MacLeod, but "there is a very bright gleam of hope that this line will not be closed." There was a similar case in Wales, he added, where a company had taken over a branch line similar to Dornoch's.

"At all events, I am hopeful that the Highland Fund will persevere and will do their utmost to bring this idea to success because they are very interested in anything pertaining to the economy of a remote area such as this."

If the Fund did run the Dornoch line, Mr. MacLeod said, the possibilities were many. He believed that if the Highland Fund got a fair chance they could show the transport authorities how to make a profit out of a venture of this kind. But Mr. MacLeod admitted that there were many snags. But he was hopeful that since the Fund had taken up this matter something favourable might result.

FACTS AND FIGURES

It was announced last week that the Highland Fund Council had made a direct approach to the British Transport Commission asking for discussions to find out how they could help to prevent the closures of branch railway lines north of Inverness, which are scheduled for March 31.

Mr. Rollo said they wanted to help financially, and were even prepared to investigate the possibility of running the Mound-Dornoch branch line independently if British Railways would make all the facts and figures available. "We are willing to go forward with constructive proposals," said Mr. Rollo.

"Our charter is to help in the economic and social development of the Highlands, and we are not going to squander money foolishly on wildcat schemes."

The fund were particularly interested in the Mound-Dornoch line because they believed it was by no means in the centre of a decaying economy.

The other branch line, between Fortrose and the main line, was 23 miles long, he added, and they felt that it would be outwith their resources to maintain it.

They were willing to discuss how they could help financially to run the Dornoch line, which has three stations and a halt along its seven and three-quarter mile length.

"It is perhaps an extraordinary step," added Mr. Rollo, "but unless we take such steps in the Highlands we shall get nowhere."

DIESEL COACHES

What form would the help take? Mr. Rollo said it might mean offering to meet the losses, or it might mean the operation of the Dornoch line as an independent unit. If they took it over, they would probably operate a frequent service of diesel coaches.

At the moment there were two trains a day in each direction. But Mr. Rollo emphasised that plans for assistance were still "only hypothetical" and nothing could be decided unless the British Transport Commission were prepared to put all their facts and figures on the table.

"NOT DECAYING"

Mr. Rollo said they had been in touch with the Transport Users' Consultative Committee on the closing of 30 stations between Inverness and Thurso, and the reply had been that they were taking no further action.

These were not decaying lines leading to a decaying community, he said. Last year 21,000 passengers were carried. It was a service which was being ended despite protests, at a time when Mr. Hugh Fraser had spoken of the area being selected for the extension of the tourist industry in the Highlands.

FORMAL VERDICT

A jury at Dingwall Sheriff Court last Friday returned a formal verdict on the death of Mr. George Hector Mackay, farm worker, Lemlair Cottages, near Dingwall. Mr. Mackay, who belonged to Melness, died from injuries he sustained in a road accident at Station Square, Dingwall, on October 24, 1959.

B.R. APPOINTMENT

Mr. Edward A. S. Thomson, formerly British Railways' assistant district traffic superintendent, Inverness, has been appointed traffic officer for the Northern division, and remains at Inverness.

Danger

Grass staggers often caused by a fall in magnesium content of soil and can be prevented by sufficient calcine during the danger period.

Either 1 lb. of Tetany Cubes or 2½ lb. of S.A.I. Super Cubes per head of supply, in a palatable form, sufficient magnesium guard dairy cows against disease.

One or the other fed every day from birth, cows first go out to pasture until at least six weeks.

Ask for the recent S.A.I. leaflet: How to Grow Grass Staggers, which, with other susceptible stock.



TULLOCH CASTLE DINGWALL (J. M'BEATH)

WREATHS, CROSSLINGS, SPRAYS made up to order. Notice.

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HELP FOR THE WEAKER

A SINGLE BOTTLE of

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may be the most SAVING A L

25 c.c. Bottle —

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* DAY-OLD *
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1/4/60

DORNOCH BRANCH RAILWAY

Highland Fund Are Taking Action

THE Rev. William MacLeod, convener, told Sutherland County Council at Lairg last Monday that the Highland Fund's proposals for keeping open the Dornoch branch railway line would be submitted to the British Transport Commission in due course.

"I am not prepared to say very much at the moment, but it should be gratifying to us that the Fund should be prepared to spend money in the county. Whether their venture will succeed or not, I am very happy to see them taking such a close interest in us."

At this point Mr G. Fraser, Dalchiel, interrupted to say it was his information that Dornoch Town Council "are not helping themselves in this matter. A fat cattle grading centre should have been working in Dornoch, but it is stopped by the Town Council."

"QUITE WRONG"

Mr MacLeod—I do not think you have the picture right.

Mr Fraser—I think I have it very good. There are three certification centres in Caithness and six in Ross-shire, and none in Sutherland. I believe this centre was absolutely complete, but the Town Council put a stop to it.

Mr MacLeod—That is quite wrong. I believe the certification centre will be established in Dornoch, but it will be established in a regular manner.

Here Mr Fraser said the Town Council were "objecting to some refuse dump."

Mr MacLeod—These two things are not related, but the certification centre, I believe, will materialise, but it must materialise on a proper basis.

Mr G. M'iver, Brora, said he understood the Highland Fund as a body had taken no action regarding the Dornoch branch line. "They haven't even discussed it."

POLICY FORMULATED

But Mr MacLeod said they had discussed the matter and formulated a policy which they were pressing on the authorities concerned. They were making an offer for the branch line. "They have definite proposals which they are pursuing with the authorities."

Mr J. H. Mackay, Melvich—Are they basing their figures on 21,000 passengers carried in 12 months?

Mr MacLeod—The Highland Fund are using figures submitted by the B.T.C.

Mr J. P. Whittet, Clashmore, said one interesting thing was that the arrangements for closing down these railway stations was fixed for last September, and yet they were still running.

Mr A. M. Ross, Brora—At a loss.



Miss Linda R. Cook, daughter of Mr John Cook, former head master of Helmsdale, her wedding, at King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, to Mr Cyril G. M. Dunlop.

RATING FIGURES FOR SUTHERLAND I

THE average rate levied in the landward area of Sutherland in 1959-60 was 25/3 $\frac{1}{2}$ —an increase of 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d compared with the previous year. The rate levied in the burgh of Dornoch was 23/-, an increase of 7/- compared with the previous year, and perhaps the largest increase for burghs in Scotland.

The average rate levied in the landward area of Caithness was 22/10 $\frac{1}{2}$, an increase of 1/0 $\frac{1}{4}$ compared with the previous year.

The average rate levied in Scotland as a whole was 23/7, compared with 23/9 in 1958-9, and 22/11 in 1957-58.

The highest rate levied in the landward area of Sutherland was 31/4 and

the lowest 24/4, while the respective figures in Caithness were 28/8 and 26/2. In the burghs of Thurso and Wick the rates levied were respectively 26/- and 21/2, increases of 5/6 and 3/6 compared with the previous year.

These figures are given in the 1960 edition of "Rates and Rateable Values in Scotland" published this week by the Scottish Home Department.

Rates were increased in 113 areas, reduced in 47 and remained unchanged in 71. The average changes for small burghs showed an increase of 5d and for landward areas of counties a decrease of 3d.

Sutherland's rateable value (landward area) for 1959-60 is given as £77,523, the estimated population is shown as 12,098, and the acreage 1,296,589. Dornoch's rateable value is given as £8973, the estimated population is given as 837 and the acreage as 1324. These figures give aggregates for the county as a whole—£86,496 (rateable value), 12,935 (population) and 1,297,913 (acreage).

Caithness rateable value is given as £215,734, the estimated population was 26,161 and the acreage area was 438,833.

The total receipts of local authorities from rates for the year are estimated to amount to £74,348,000 compared with £70,541,000 in 1958-59, the rateable value on which rates are leviable is £63,111,000 compared with

"Early Start" on Rosehall Water Scheme

THE engineers' February progress report for county piped water supply schemes was in the following terms—

Lochinver—Construction of the new works has been substantially completed and work is proceeding on backfilling around tanks, fencing tanks and reinstatement of the Baddidaroch trench. Connections to the new mains are proceeding. Plans are being prepared for a thorough investigation of the old mains by cutting out sections to decide where scraping is necessary.

been explained last year, the grant offer of 51 per cent. for the fourth group of water supply schemes was "calculated in accordance with the criteria agreed with the Treasury and uniformly applied throughout Scotland, and it is regretted that it is not possible to amend the grant offer.

"While it is noted that the Rosehall and Little Rogart schemes are included in the Fraser development scheme for the Bonar-Bridge area, the Department's understanding is that the water

Northern Times

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 1960.

MISERABLE STORY

WHETHER one is for or against the British Transport Commission's decision to close certain railway stations north of Inverness, one must have sympathy with the local authorities who have been fighting the case for so long and who have been led to hope, by one reprieve after the other, that there would be some substantial concessions.

Now they are going to the House of Commons with their protest next week, in a final effort to have the closure deferred again. That is a reasonable proposal, especially since we are coming into the beginning of the visitor season, and Rogart is part of the Fraser tourist development plan.

The view that the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee had not given the authorities concerned full or proper support (expressed on Wednesday at Inverness by Councillor G. M. Morrison, of Bonar-Bridge) will be backed by many, for here it was that the rot set in. This committee shut their eyes to local conditions. Between Bonar and Lairg, a distance of 10 miles, there are two small stations which are going to remain open, while between Lairg and Golspie, a distance of 18 miles, there is going to be none with the closure of Rogart and The Mound. If there are good and sufficient reasons for this these have never been expressed publicly.

The whole sorry matter has been miserably handled. If the B.T.C. had said at the start that they were not going to give way on any account, then there would be more sympathy for them to-day.

"Highland Week"

LATER this month hotelkeepers in Dornoch are holding a "Highland Week," a project started by Mrs Burns, of the Castle Hotel, last year. Now she has been joined by other hotel proprietors. Mr and Mrs William Currie, of the Burghfield House Hotel, spoke of their plans for this popular event in the B.B.C.'s "Town and Country" V.H.F. programme broadcast from Rosemarkie last Tuesday night.

The new V.H.F. magazine programme for Orkney, Caithness and Strathnaver, which opened on Tuesday night, provides a possible link between Gaelic speakers in Orkney and the northernmost outpost of their native speech on the mainland. Mr Ian Grahame, who belongs to Lochinver and who lives in Kirkwall, ended the programme with a few remarks about this addressed to Gaelic listeners.

DOG-OWNERS WARNED

At Dornoch Sheriff Court last Tuesday the owners of two dogs which had chased sheep at Achina, Bettyhill, on March 20 last, were ordered to keep the animals under proper control.

PROPERTY FOR SALE

LAIRG

FOR SALE, by Private Bargain, the Dwelling-house known as Craighlynn, Lairg, containing 2 public and 2 bedrooms, kitchen, etc.; electricity. For further particulars apply to the Subscribers, with whom offers should be lodged by 18th May, 1960.

GEORGE ROSS & NOBLE,
Solicitors, Inverness.

THESE RAIL STATIONS CLOSE SPLEN
ON JUNE 13

B.T.C. "Sacrifice Highlands"

SUTHERLAND was represented at the meeting of local authorities in Inverness on Wednesday to protest against the British Transport Commission's decision to close certain branch railway lines and passenger stations north of Inverness on Monday, June 13. Rogart, The Mound, Cambusavie Halt, Skeibo, Embo and Dornoch will all be affected.

Since last July this action has been on the cards (writes a correspondent) and the closure originally was to be on a date last September, but because of vigorous protests the B.T.C. held off, announced a new date, and that in turn was abandoned. Now, at last, they have made up their minds, and apparently there is to be no concession.

CONVENER'S COMMENT

Commenting on the decision, the Rev. William MacLeod, convener of Sutherland, and provost of Dornoch, said last Monday, "It is beyond me what they are trying to do. I think the British Transport Commission are determined to do this as a kind of gesture to cover up their own lack of

LAST BID

At a protest meeting in Inverness on Wednesday Highland local authorities' representatives appointed a six-man deputation to go to the House of Commons next week in a final effort to have deferred the British Transport Commission's decision to close down certain branch lines and railway passenger services on June 13.

proper organisation and management. That is, in my view, responsible for their financial difficulties.

"We are just in the same old role—the poor old Highlands are sacrificed to cover up the Commission's difficulties in other parts. With our sparseness of population, they assume that the Highlands will always take everything quietly. They assume, since this part of the world is somewhat more patient and responsible than other areas, that what happened in Cyprus and Malta could not happen in the Highlands. But they are making a mistake for as the Old Book says, 'oppression makes even wise men mad'."

And Mr J. P. Whittet, Sutherland County Council's representative on the Highland local authorities' deputation, who have been negotiating with the B.T.C., commented, "It seems most extraordinary and quite absurd altogether that they are closing these stations right at the beginning of the tourist season."

COMMITTEE ATTACKED

Mr G. M. Murray, who represents Rogart on the County Council, also deplored the fact that the stations were to be closed at the beginning of the summer season. He added, "What is annoying me also is the amount of public money and valuable time wasted in our negotiations with the Commission."

And he deplored the part played by the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee who had approved everything put forward by the Commission. "Instead of helping us they have done the opposite. This shows

that this committee sadly need reviewing, they are so one-sided.

"I am terribly disappointed with this decision. It is against every effort we are making for progress. We shall want to know the reasons for this action and for all the delays there have been. Why were we called for talks in Edinburgh and London? After all the time that has elapsed we are back where we started, and the Commission are carrying out their original proposals."

So far as Rogart was concerned the Commission were going to close down the passenger service at the station but keep two men on duty to deal with parcels. Even if they had made this an unattended halt for passengers it would have helped the situation, for he had no confidence in the proposed bus service, especially in winter when the roads were snowbound.

HIGHLAND FUND HOPE

It will be recalled that in the fight to keep the stations open the North deputation went to London to meet Mr Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, and in March the Highland Fund, Ltd., offered to maintain the section of railway between The Mound and Dornoch.

A reorganised passenger service will run between Inverness and Wick and Thurso, and passenger trains will be withdrawn from the following stations:—Bunchrew, Lentrane, Clunes, Beaulieu, Muir of Ord, Conon, Foulis, Evanton, Alness, Delny, Kildary, Nigg, Edderton, Rogart, The Mound, Cambusavie Halt, Skeibo, Embo, Dornoch, Loth, Halkirk, Bower Watten and Bilbster.

"Go Out" to Attract Industry

Mr G. M. Murray, Rogart, asked Sutherland County Council last week if any industrial firms had been approached about setting up factories in these parts. He had broached the matter at a previous meeting, he said, when they were discussing recommendations from a public meeting held at Balrav.

The Rev. William MacLeod, convener, said the assurance had been given that the council would give every help to any firm who wanted to start an industry here.

Mr Murray — Try to make some approach. Other counties have done so. I feel that we as a local authority should make approaches and not just wait.

"Missing" Climber Sought

THE other Sunday morning two shots from a gamekeeper's gun and a handkerchief signal told a search party that a climber missing on Ben Hee, in Sutherland, was safe. The climber was Mr George Speed, who works in the chemical department at Dounreay atomic energy station.

He had been one of a party who had climbed to the top of the mountain on the Saturday. Speed was missing when the party, after encountering dense fog, reached the foot of the mountain. A search party arrived from Thurso on

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LOCHIEL'S "SHOCK" FOR NORTH COUNTIES

His "Attitude":—Inverness-Wick Railway Line Will Be Closed Down Eventually

COLONEL Cameron of Lochiel, chairman of the Scottish Area Board of the British Transport Commission, had taken the attitude that in time the whole railway line from Inverness to Wick and Thurso would be closed down.

That was stated by Mr J. G. Macdonald in Dornoch last Friday night when he was telling the Town Council about the meeting held in Inverness the previous Wednesday by Northern local authority representatives to protest against the B.T.C. decision to close down certain branch railway lines and passenger stations on June 13 next.

Mr Macdonald, paying tribute to the efforts of the chairman, Provost Wotherpoon, of Inverness, said he had been "very severe" in his criticism of Lochiel. "We got the greatest shock when Lochiel suggested in his letter that in the very near future the railway line will be closed from Inverness to Wick and Thurso. That is Lochiel's attitude. He stated that in his letter."

COMMITTEE ATTACKED

Mr W. C. Wright, the clerk, who also attended the Inverness meeting on behalf of Dornoch Town Council, said that for some time he had been in favour of some form of interdict being taken out "against all and sundry so that the people who have been eluding the issue would be forced to come forward with their arguments. I found, unfortunately, that my idea was far from popular."

"It was quite obvious from the very beginning that the July meeting in Edinburgh with the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee was the kernel of the whole thing. If that committee had made a recommendation against the British Transport Commission proposals in any form, the way would have been clear to have held up the closing of the railway. The mere fact that they made no such recommendation at all meant that everyone, including the Minister of Transport and the Prime Minister, could turn round and say they therefore could do nothing about it. That was the crux of the matter."

LONDON LEAD

Mr H. Clunie said it appeared that the Scottish Area Board were following the lead given them by London in the shape of the British Transport Commission.

He had read the letter which was a great deal of decentralisation in the railways. Now here was this body, which were supposed to be looking after the Highlands, at present following the lead given by London. They were not doing anything at all to keep the Highland line open. It was the same with roads. Now more buses were going to be put on roads which were not fit for the extra load.

Mr Wright said that so far as the rail closure plan was concerned there was a "plethora of bodies" who accepted no responsibility.

Provost William MacLeod commented that the Government White Paper, "Review of Highland Policy," so far as transport was concerned, seemed to be "just talk and nothing more. We must have misread this White Paper alto-

gether. We thought it was something to help us. Instead of helping us, we are in danger of losing our transport services altogether. And we have no air service."

Here Mr Wright said that the lack of interest of such as the Highland Panel, Tourist Board and Crofters Commission was "only too painfully obvious." None of these bodies was represented at the Inverness meeting.

Mr Macdonald commented that such as Mr William Nicholson, manager of the Scottish Tourist Board, had "slipped gently and quietly out of it." And so had the two M.P.s, Colonel Neil MacLean and Mr Jack Macleod. "Someone had got at them. They are acting under orders."

Provost MacLeod—At the start, all these bodies were interested (in fighting the closure) and here we are.

Mr Macdonald—They said gently out of it.

WORK IS WANTED

Provost MacLeod continued, "It cannot be denied that the Government are spending a lot of money on the Highlands, but the way is a right way and a wrong way. Money is being spent on roads and various projects, but it is not being spent in a way that will mean any recovery so far as population of this county is concerned. What we want is work for our people. No amount of tourism or advice from the Highland Panel will give us a stable economic basis. We must get work for our people, and it is the Government's responsibility to see that we are getting a fair share of the work available.

"The Highlands were neglected before any of us were born. It has gone on progressively. We shall find ourselves without any reasonable population at all, and the Highlands will be turned into what one politician has described as a playground for the rest of the nation. That is not what we want for the Highlands. This brings home to me the strange apathy of our own people in Dornoch that we are left here without a full complement of councillors."

Tongue's T.V. Plans

Once the North of Scotland Hydro-Board say their power poles can be used, television plans for the village of Tongue will go ahead.

Tongue is a "black spot" for normal aeriels, and a club has been formed in the village with the object of building an aerial on high ground behind Braetongue and pipe T.V. signals by line to local viewers wishing to take part in the scheme. The cost of the equipment is over £400, and at present there are 19 members in the T.V. club, but many more are expected to join once television gets under way.

The use of the power poles is essential, and once the club get the Hydro Board's permission the contractors will be ready to go to work.

New Town Clerk

MR HUGH MUNRO, son of Mr and Mrs A. Munro, 5 Macdonald Road, Dornoch, has been appointed town clerk of Tain.

Mr Munro, who is with the firm of M'Tavish and M'Kenzie, solicitors, Tain, had his legal training in Edinburgh, and with Arthur and Carmichael, Dornoch, before going on national service. He was educated at Dornoch Academy and at Edinburgh University, where he gained his B.L.

RAIL CLOSURES PROTEST

"Humbugged" by Mr Marples

AS we reported last week Highland local authorities are to "lobby" M.P.s in the House of Commons over the British Transport Commission's decision to close certain branch railway lines and passenger stations north of Inverness on Monday, June 13.

Affected in Sutherland are The Mound-Dornoch branch line and Rogart passenger station.

At last week's meeting of local authority representatives at Inverness—Provost Robert Wotherpoon presided—the Prime Minister, the Minister of Transport, Cameron of Lochiel and Sir John Banks, chairman of the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee, were all attacked for their part in the prolonged negotiations.

BRISTLING WITH DIFFICULTIES

"The problem is so thorny and bristling with difficulties no one wants to hold on to it. They just pass it on to someone else," commented Provost Wotherpoon. He read recent letters received in reply to their protests. These were some of the comments made by delegates.

On the Prime Minister—"I don't think he knows there is such a place as the North of Scotland," said Sutherland County Councillor George M. Murray, Rogart. "He plays golf here, that is all."

Provost Wotherpoon—He may play golf at Dornoch, but he doesn't have to depend on trains to get there.

On Mr Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, who sent a lengthy statement showing how he reconciled the rail closure with Government White Papers for the development of the Highlands.

"GHOSTLY DOCUMENT"

"It is the most extraordinary document I have ever read," said Provost Wotherpoon. "If ever we were humbugged, it is by a document like this. He must regard us as a lot of imbeciles if he thinks we can't see through the full effect of a document of this nature. It is a ghostly document. We can't stand by and see a priceless heritage taken from us in this unscrupulous manner."

On Lochiel, chairman of the Scottish area board of the B.T.C.—"Our letter to him asked quite a few pertinent questions, but he treats it with utter contempt and in a manner every member here resents," said Provost Wotherpoon. "This letter comes from a man whom you would expect to have the interest of the Highlands more at heart."

On Sir John Banks and the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee—"They didn't give us full or sufficient support because they were unaware of all the circumstances," said Mr G. M. Morrison, Dornoch and Creich District Councillor.

On the Scottish Area Board of the B.T.C.—"The people in the far North are being deprived of an adequate transport system through the trickery of the Board. They have hoodwinked the people—some of their figures are definitely wrong, and the B.T.C. have failed to make any reference to them," said Councillor D. Mackenzie, Inverness.

FOR BIBLE SOCIETY

Contributions from Sutherland to the National Bible Society of Scotland during 1959 amounted to £371 (general and jubilee).

Details:—Bettihill £22, Clyne £72, Creich £14, Dornoch £69, Golspie £11, Helmsdale £54, Kilmohervie £48, Lairg £15, Lochinver £28, Melness £5, Rogart £21, Skerryray £12, Stoer and Clashnessie 10/-.

"Talky-Talky" Before School Building

THERE had been five months' argument with the Scottish Education Department about the site for the new one-teacher school at Altnaharra, it was stated at last week's meeting of Sutherland Education Committee. It seemed that it took far longer to reach the stage of beginning the building than the actual building work itself. The plans had been produced for Altnaharra in three weeks,

Mr J. M'Lellan, director of education, said that they had not yet got back the plans for the new senior secondary school to be built at Golspie, although the Department had had them since January.

Mr J. H. Mackay, Melvich, said that for a schoolroom and house at Altnaharra the delay seemed extraordinary, although Mr M'Lellan admitted, "We ourselves take quite a time about doing things."

So far as the delay in getting ahead with the new junior secondary school for Bettihill was concerned, Mr M'Lellan said he now had the preliminary plans. When they were approved they would go to the Planning Committee. The Department would get a copy. Then the proper plans would be drawn up.

Mr Mackay—We have to take steps to acquire the site.

On a brighter note, Mr M'Lellan announced that building work on the new junior secondary school for Clyne had now begun.

TWO TEACHERS TO EDUCATION COM.

Pointer for Rest of

MRS C. P. RUTHERFORD, vice-chairman, borrowing a phrase from the Prime Minister, described the move to have teachers represented on Sutherland Education Committee as an indication of the "wind of change."

The committee approved a recommendation by the Joint Advisory Council (representing the Education Committee and the teachers) that two teachers should sit on the committee although they would have no voting powers—for an experimental period of one year. The time was coming when teachers would sit as full members, said Mrs Rutherford.

The voting was six in favour of the recommendation and five against.

The teachers concerned will be nominated by the local branches of the Educational Institute of Scotland, but their choice will not be confined to E.I.S. membership.

ALWAYS COUNCILLORS

It had so been stated at the Joint Advisory Council meeting on behalf of the teachers, that the two persons of experience in education, stipulated under the Act to be appointed to the committee, were always county councillors. The teachers did not think that was implementing fully the spirit of the Act and the administrative scheme.

The committee representatives explained that it had to be remembered that the reason was to allow every parish in the county to be represented on the committee. Eleven county councillors were entitled to sit on the committee, but there were 13 parishes.

Mr J. M'Lellan, director of education, began the committee debate by saying that the two teachers who would be delegated to attend would be there really to give advice when it was sought. They would not necessarily take part in the discussion unless they were allowed to do so.

Mr A. M. Ross, Brora—There is a shortage of teachers.

Mr G. M'Ever, Brora, said he thought they should support this proposal. By attending the meetings teachers would realise the difficulties the committee were up against in administering education and that would make for co-operation.

Mr Ross, who was concerned about the teachers being away all day from school, said the agenda could be so arranged that it might mean only a half-day off.

HOSPITAL SERVICE EXAMPLE

Mr M'Lellan commented that many professional organisations felt they should have a voice on committees which concerned them. There was an example in the hospital service. "Teachers for many years have felt they should have some representation on education committees and, of course, with each Education Act representations have been made to the Secretary of State for Scotland, but nothing has happened. This is an attempt to give the teachers some interest." Both committee and teachers alike would benefit.

It would create greater harmony between them. "It is a new step. I do not think any other area in Scotland has taken it. I would recommend you to accept his proposal," said Mr M'Lellan.

Mrs Rutherford—I would support it also.

Replying to the teachers' point about the two members with educational experience who might be appointed outwith the County Council membership, Mr M'Ever said there were 11 county councillors on the committee and there were 13 parishes. It was always felt that each parish should be represented "Because of that we had to take in the two persons experienced in education to make up the 11 to 13."

Mr MacLeod—That happened to be the system, but I do not think we chose anyone who had no educational experience.

Mr Ross—Was our action against the law?

NO CLOSED DOOR

Mr M'Ever—It is against the spirit of the regulations. We explained to the teachers it was not an attempt to keep anyone out.

Mr MacLeod said he had no objection inviting teachers to their meetings, if they are satisfied they can afford the teaching hours involved. I would like to be assured of that. He went on to say that he did not think teachers should be chosen by the E.I.S.—they should be chosen by the Education Committee.

Mr M'Lellan replied that after all only full education meetings were concerned. It was quite competent for them to invite teachers to attend these meetings to have their advice. But there would be no voting powers. Everything they dealt with concerned education.

Mr M'Ever said he thought they had reached the stage where the teachers had a right to a say, even although they had no voting powers. That would be working along the same lines as the hospital service where doctors and surgeons were represented on the adminis-

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MUSEUM NOW FOR DORNOCH ?

Exhibition's Success

SUGGESTION that a museum might be instituted in Dornoch made by the Rev. F. H. Fulton, minister of the Cathedral, when he spoke on Thursday of last week, the Council's Arts and Crafts exhibition in connection with the burgh's centenary week.

Fulton was introduced by Mr J. Macdonald, the oldest serving member of the council. "There is a wonderful collection of exhibits of all kinds here," commented Mr Macdonald. **"GREAT CREDIT"**

Fulton, who said how very glad he was to open the exhibition, said, "It is a great credit to the Town Council, and especially to Miss Christie, whose idea it was. Some of these exhibits are very old and others quite new and made by young people. It is extremely good to see so many things collected. A lot of hard work has gone into the collection here, and the Town Council are indebted to many people for lending their treasures. It is very hard to find in Dornoch anything movable which is pre-16th century. Most of the things here date from after that time, but some of the exhibits are very much earlier. Our exhibits are far too big to bring into this council chamber, like the Cathedral and Castle out there, and hundreds and so on round about."

LOCAL LEGEND
The Cathedral has nothing to show of the pre-Reformation days, and the legend has it that a lot of the treasures of the Cathedral were buried in a secret passage beneath Castle Dornoch and the Cathedral. It would be thrilling if that were proved to be true.

commend this exhibition to your attention, and I hope that it goes on to something bigger. It would be very interesting to have a permanent exhibition if sufficient old things could be collected."

PROSPECT
Minister Bailie J. A. Wickham, who thanked Mr Fulton and Mr Macdonald for their services, said the exhibition was "something for us to think over as our own Council. We must institute a permanent museum, with this exhibition as the nucleus."

together, there were about 500 visitors to the exhibition.

Liberals' Move
Both Wickham and Sutherland are to have a Liberal candidate for Parliament in the next election. Pending the adoption of a General Election candidate, Liberal Party headquarters have indicated that they will nominate a candidate in the event of a by-election in the constituency. Wickham's health Liberal Association decided a meeting in Halkirk last Monday to ask party headquarters to contact representatives in Sutherland in order that a joint meeting of the two counties may be held to discuss the adoption of a candidate for the General Election. Pending the summer a number of speakers will be invited to give addresses at Liberal meetings in the constituency.

KING GEORGE TRUST'S APPEAL FOR YOUTH

M.P.s STILL FIGHTING RAIL CLOSURE

But North Hopes Are Fading Now

HIGHLAND M.P.s, it is understood, have learned that Mr Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport, has now written Provost Wotherspoon, of Inverness, who led the Highland deputation, that after further consideration he has again reached the conclusion that he cannot interfere with the British Transport Commission's new plan for the Highland railways.

This decision, together with news that announcements are now being posted giving public notice of the intention to carry out the rail closures and changes on June 13, has not weakened the determination of Highland M.P.s to carry on their Parliamentary campaign to get even a last-minute postponement.

Sir David Robertson, Mr Jack MacLeod and Mr Neil McLean conferred at Westminster last Tuesday and decided to recruit all support possible in the Commons to appeal for a debate on the Highland railway crisis in the House before June 13.

The Highland M.P.s have been greatly handicapped in putting their case before the House at question time by the rule which prevents question and answer on the daily administration of nationalised industries.

Several questions seeking intervention by the Prime Minister have been sidetracked by being transferred to the Minister of Transport or Scottish Secretary.

Sir David received no further satisfaction from two questions on the Highland situation he had on the order paper on Tuesday. Both were too far down the list to be reached for oral answer, so Sir David was deprived of the opportunity of putting some pointed supplementaries.

He asked the Minister of Transport about the Government's policy with regard to subsidising railways in the Highlands as an essential service.

The written answer by Mr John Hay, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry, took the matter no further. It merely stated the future of the railways as a whole is at present under study, and he regretted he could not

Coming Events?

BECAUSE of redundancy a number of Dornoch railway employees have been offered jobs elsewhere by the British Transport Commission. This would seem to indicate that there will be no reprieve for the Dornoch branch line, due to close on June 13.

Our Dornoch correspondent writes, "Notices have now been served on these employees just as Dornoch is about to start its summer boom, and at a time when little or nothing has been done to reconstruct roads leading to and from the burgh, although this has been advocated for some time by local representatives on the County Council."

"Employees who are likely to accept posts elsewhere, even although they may not have to go farther afield than Brora and Bonar-Bridge, will find it a bit awkward travelling by bus from and to their homes."

add to the statement by the Prime Minister on March 10.

Sir David's second question to the Scottish Secretary inquired whether he was aware that the Government's policy for the development of the Highland tourist industry conflicts with the decision of the British Transport Commission to close down branch lines and main line stations in the Highlands.

Sir David suggested the Scottish Secretary should consult with the Commission in order to remove this difficulty.

In a written answer Mr Gilmour Leburn, Under-Secretary, disagreed with the suggestion that there was any conflict.

He stated that the Minister of Transport had sent the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee the statement for which they asked, reconciling the Government policy for the Highlands as set out in the White Paper of June, 1959, which included the development of tourism, with the action taken by the B.T.C. to close certain stations and branch lines north of Inverness.

Sir David Robertson said on Wednesday night, "The fight is going on. This is the one essential public service, which is very much the responsibility of members of Parliament of both sides of the House."

Support for Board

"IN practically every part of Sutherland there is established every modern public service—water, drainage, and a system of well-surfaced roads and, thanks to the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, an electricity network covering practically the whole county. Along with these facilities there are also seaports on the north, east and west coasts of the county."

That is stated by the Rev. William MacLeod, convener of Sutherland, in a booklet, "The North for Industry in Scotland," just published by the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board. Mr MacLeod goes on,

"Industrial workers can be recruited in ample number from the native population who would welcome work that gives them an assurance of remaining in their native county, and life for the industrialist and his worker can be very pleasant in the Highlands."

"Should these suggestions sow a seed in some industrialists' mind to the extent that he becomes sufficiently interested to make further enquiry, I can assure him that it will be given immediate attention and the County Council will give every measure of help and assistance within its power."

New Dornoch Hotel

The new Burghfield Hotel in Dornoch, which is being built at an estimated cost of £10,000, will soon be ready to cope with the growing tourist demands.

It has taken only eleven weeks to complete. The hotel is being built by the Currie family and will mainly cater for coach parties. It adjoins the Burghfield House Hotel, once the home of Lord Rothermere.

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Also Very Finest S
MINCE, BOILING
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Messrs **PETE
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GERMAN BIRN

12 x 4



An estate car was in head-on collision with a private car on at the west end of Golspie last week. The passenger in the car, an Indian, was detained in hospital with head injuries.

LEE OF PITFURCH, ROGART

Service on Sunday—And the Conventicle in Evening

Church of Scotland, will celebrate its special service next Sunday (June 5) and an article in the evening, particularly gratifying to a minister, the Rev. J. a year or two ago was concerned in getting the old man's, where the Rogart worship, brought back extensive alterations. The U.F. Church (as it first opened on June 10, service was conducted by Lee, secretary of the Committee. The minister-gation was the Rev. J.

Mr McMillan was minister of Pitfure from 1910 to 1926, and he was followed by the Rev. Alexander Macleod, who died a year or two ago—he was present at the rededication of St. Callan's, A. son, Mr George Macleod, lives at Tamlang, Dornoch.

Then came the Rev. Ewen Macdonald, the last U.F. minister before the union. It was during his ministry, the brochure tells us, that the congregation decided, in 1939, to acquire an organ, "to assist the precursor in improving church praise." The organ, "with very fine tone and 16 stops," cost £35.

Mr Macdonald died in tragic circumstances. He collapsed at Helmsdale railway station when returning from conducting sacrament services.

Next minister at Pitfure was the Rev. Murdoch MacSween, who is now at Lochalsh. Then in 1953 arrived the present minister, Mr. Imrie. In 1956 St. Callan's Church, after renovations costing £1254, was reopened and rededicated by the Rev. William Sutherland.

Another highlight for Mr Imrie was that in 1958 Mr George Murray, Davoch, presented the church with a set of 36 individual communion cups in memory of his father, Alexander, who had been an elder from 1890 until his death in 1949.

Pitfure church itself was rededicated recently, and the local Women's Guild gifted a new curtain for the wall behind the pulpit and also a pulpit fall.

LOYAL WORKERS

In the brochure special tribute is paid to "two loyal and faithful workers in the building and making of our church"—William Grant, of Rowallan, and Mr Angus Pirie, Birch Cottage, who died in 1954. The late Mr Grant had served the church "with great devotion" from 1902 until 1917, and Mr Angus Pirie, who became an elder in 1914, had been precursor for many years.

The brochure also refers to Miss Mary Fraser, formerly of Inchcape, who had been Sunday School teacher for 25 years, and Mr Nathaniel Murray, present precursor, whose long service had been recognised both by the congregation and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Call to Government

A UNANIMOUS call to the Government to take responsibility for tackling Highland development problems went out from the Scottish T.U.C. conference which ended at Inverness last Saturday.

The conference passed a resolution calling for the formation of a Highland Development Authority, backed by Government finance, to co-ordinate the work of the various bodies and organisations tackling Highland affairs.

Shop Destroyed by Fire

A shop in Ardgay — it ed beside the railway ned to the ground early rning.

Five hours before the l had been taken from ve charged in connecting-aking of the till, and travelled to Ardgay, of cause of the fire. A

'FOLLOW THE SEA' SATURDAY, JUNE 11, WILL BE MEMORABLE

Committee's Initiative

SUTHERLAND Education Committee are hoping to launch a pilot scheme this summer to encourage boys to take up the sea as a career. The committee will provide protective clothing and insurance, and certain fishermen in Helmsdale, nominated by the fishery officer, will take the boys on their boats for periods during the summer holidays.

The scheme was outlined to the committee at Lairg last Tuesday by Mr J. McLeish, director of education, who said they hoped to extend it to other parts of the county, taking in Lochinver and Kinlochbervie on the west coast.

The Rev. J. Mackay, Rosehall, suggested that Helmsdale Junior Secondary School might be the centre for the scheme, which would include instruction in navigation. The fishing industry on the west coast seemed to be very progressive, and this might encourage more local people to go in for it.

Most of the boats fishing from Kinlochbervie and Lochinver are from outside the county, and here was a chance to encourage more local representation, Mr Mackay added.

Athletics Tribute

AS a mark of their appreciation of performances by Dornoch Academy and Golspie Senior Secondary School athletics teams, Sutherland Education Committee agreed at Lairg last Tuesday to increase the grant to each school from £10 to £20 to meet transport costs.

M. G. M'IVER, Brora, pointed out that last Saturday at Dingwall a combined Dornoch and Golspie team had taken first place against schools from all over the North. That was a tribute to their instructors as well as to the pupils themselves.

Five Golspie boys are to take part in the Scottish schools championships in Glasgow.

Recruits Wanted

No. 6 Movement Control Group, R.E., a Scottish unit of the Army Emergency Reserve, whose ranks include Scotsmen from all parts of the country in many walks of life, has been reorganised on a regimental basis and now forms the nucleus of Scotland's newest regiment—the 75th (Scottish) Movement Control Regiment, R.E. (A.E.R.).

The regiment's commanding officer, Lieut.-Col. John Young, Edinburgh, is particularly keen to recruit good clerks, especially if they have an interest in transport or goods handling problems or have a wide knowledge of Army organisation. Previous service in the forces is desirable, but not essential, and any men who are interested (age limits 17½-50) are invited to write to him at 1 Rosslyn Crescent, Edinburgh.

There are also vacancies for officers for the new 182 (Highland) Squadron which forms part of the regiment. Whilst the A.E.R. cannot be classed as a spare-time job financially, the reservist is not out of pocket as he is paid for his 15 days at the new Regular Army rates of pay and receives a tax-free bounty at camp. In addition many employers grant additional leave to the reservist, so that he can attend camp if he wishes without forfeiting his family holidays. Camps are held in the South of England either in July or September, the choice of the more convenient time being left to the individual.

All-Night Rally

Thirteen members of Caithness and Sutherland Car Clubs took part in a 250-mile all-night rally, which finished at Lybster, 13 miles south of Wick.

The over-all winner was Bailie William G. Mowat, Wick, in an Austin. Second was John Leask, Thurso, (Volkswagen), and third Leslie Sutherland, Thurso (Morris). First in the sports car section was H. Arnold, Wick, in an Austin Sprite.

COLSPIE SCHOOL SPORTS

Golspie Senior Secondary School held their annual sports on Wednesday, when the principal results were—

House championships—1. Dunrobin (167 points), 2. Ben Bhraggie (186), 3 (Silver Cup), 178.

Individual championships—Over 16—Joan Fraser, Alex L. Sutherland, Under 15—Rosemary Watson, Dennis Sutherland, Under 12—Ann Tapper, Alex Hamilton.

The prizes were presented by Mrs H. M. Ferrier.

GOLF TUITION

Mr D. K. Laird, Dornoch, physical training instructor with Sutherland education authority, is once again running golf coaching classes under the Golf Foundation Scheme.

Extra Coaches May Be Needed For Last Runs on Dornoch Railway

AT the moment it looks as if Stationmaster George Sim will have to put on extra coaches to carry all the passengers who may want to travel on the last train out of Dornoch a week to-morrow (June 11) — the branch line to the Mound goes out of existence under the British Transport Commission's reorganisation plan on the following Monday (June 13).

Mr Sim, who has been stationmaster at Dornoch for the past six years—he is an Aberdonian—told "The Northern Times" on Wednesday, "A lot of people have been telling me they are going to make this last journey quite a few told me they had made the first one—on Monday, June 2, 1960, when the line was opened. So I am prepared to put on another coach, and it would be only right that local folks should make this a memorable occasion for engine driver Tom Fraser and his guard, Donald Bain. I understand that many Embo people will also be there."

Altogether, it should be a busy scene on Dornoch station. "But it all depends on the weather," added Mr Bain.

The last run from the Mound to Dornoch on June 11 will be at 2.5 p.m.

As has been stated, the line is to close down with effect from June 13, and Mr Sim said it was on June 13 six years ago that he took up his duties at Dornoch. Where station personnel were going he did not yet know.

Mr Fraser, who is 64, started as a cleaner at Dornoch shortly before the First World War.

M.P.'S QUESTIONS

Sir David Robertson and the Highland M.P.s have asked for a debate in the House of Commons before June 13, the closure date for certain railway branch lines and passenger stations north of Inverness.

The Mound-Dornoch branch line and Rogart passenger service are affected in Sutherland.

In the Commons last week, Sir David asked Mr Edward Heath, Minister of Labour, what information he had received from the British Transport Commission regarding the number of railwaymen and women who would lose their jobs on 13th June, and he also asked the Minister what alternative work he expected to find for them in Caithness and Sutherland where the unemployment rate was always the highest on the mainland of Great Britain.

Mr Heath—I am informed that 79 posts will be affected and that all those concerned will be offered other work by British Railways.

Later, in a letter to the Minister, Sir David said the House was obviously pleased about Mr Heath's reply, "and I felt it would be ungracious to ask the obvious supplementary, 'How many are being employed in Caithness and Sutherland and in the Highland area?' Perhaps you will kindly let me have this information by return."

ALTERNATIVE WORK

"When the Highland deputiation was here 10 days ago, he stated that the information they had received from the British Transport Commission on redundancy was that 121 men would be discharged on 13th June, jobs for 43 would be found in the area, leaving a balance of 78 men who would either have to shift to other areas or be sacked. Perhaps you will let me have the facts.

"If most of them have to move from the Highland area that means further depopulation which has been and still is our greatest affliction. Of course, many of the men may refuse to move because they have homes in the Highlands, their children are at school there, and it would be too great an upheaval."

Mr Heath replied that his information was that of the 79 posts, 69 of those affected would be offered alternative work in Caithness and Sutherland, or in Ross and Cromarty. The remaining 10, who were salaried staff, would be offered posts elsewhere in Scotland.

FLAGS AND BUNTING

WHEN Dornoch light railway was opened on June 2, 1962, every house in the burgh was decorated with flags and bunting (writes a correspondent). And the fishing village of Embo turned out en masse to see the first train passing by. All along the line, from Dornoch to The Mound, the public showed their interest by having more than one run on the train, the drawings on the opening day being—Dornoch £16, Embo £10, Skelbo £4, and The Mound £5.

Mr William Whiteleaw, chairman of the Highland Railway Company, and his directors, were met at The Mound by Mr Donald Maclean, Golspie, chairman of the Dornoch Company, and his directors, who travelled in the Duke of Sutherland's private train, Dunrobin,

and joined the ordinary train to Dornoch at The Mound.

At Dornoch station they were met by the Town Council, who had marched in procession from the municipal buildings, preceded by Dornoch Brass Band. Provost Sutherland was accompanied by Bailies Mackintosh and Mackay, Dean of Guild Murray, and Councillors MacLachlan, Mackay and Johnstone. About 1000 people waited at the station and on the arrival of the train there was a hearty burst of cheering.

DUKE'S GESTURE

The construction of the railway was due in large measure to the public spirit and enterprise of the Duke of Sutherland, who had not only given the land free of charge, but had also subscribed £5000 towards the work, with a guarantee of £3000 to the railway company.

The opening ceremony was performed by Mr D. Maclean, factor for the Duke of Sutherland.

Mr Andrew Carnegie, of Skibo, said he appreciated the new attractions which the railway would bring to Dornoch.

The most practical, and most important, part in the construction of the line was played by Mr William Roberts, engineer-in-chief to the Highland Railway Company. In the designing he experienced difficulties because of the limited space at The Mound. It was the first railway to be built by him under the Light Railways Act, and he made a good job of it. His son, Donald, was resident engineer.

Now comes the closure of the railway, 58 years afterwards, but in the present age the bias is on road travel, and by this means it is to be hoped that Dornoch will continue to prosper.

YOUR BABY

FIRST SOLID FOOD

From a Correspondent

Baby so far has been thriving splendidly on a milk diet, but after about four months milk alone does not suffice. If growth and development are to continue unchecked, the little one requires a supplement to the feeds, and an ever-increasing number of mothers find that an ideal First Solid Food is "Ovaline" Chuckles. There are sound reasons why Chuckles should prove so popular. They have been scientifically produced in the Ovaline Research Laboratories from the finest ingredients of the highest quality, and specially fortified with additional vitamins B and D and essential minerals. When crushed and added to the feed they form a nutritious fluid of outstanding value and one, moreover, which is economical, as a carton of Chuckles can be bought for 1/5. Details regarding the quantities to use, are given in a table found in each carton.

When baby's teeth begin to appear "Ovaline" Rusks should be used. Crisp and crunchy, they help to bring the little teeth easily through the gums and to keep them sound and regularly spaced. Furthermore, they assist in promoting the correct formation of the mouth. Made from the finest ingredients, these Rusks are nourishing, delicious and easy to digest. Cartons cost 1/- and 1/10.—Advt.

CARS FOR SALE

- SECOND-HAND VEHICLES FOR SALE
- 1959 Morris Oxford Saloon
 - 1959 Sunbeam Rapier Saloon
 - 1957 Hillman Minx de Luxe Saloon
 - 1956 Hillman Californian
 - 1956 Model M.G. Magnette Saloon
 - 1956 Model Hillman Saloon
 - 1956 Model Standard 10 Saloon
 - 1955 Hillman Estate Car
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 - 1953 Humber Hawk Saloon
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 - 1953 Model Morris Minor Saloon
 - 1952 Morris Oxford Saloon
 - 1950 Model Riley 1 1/2-Litre Saloon
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 - 1958 Model Commer Express Delivery Van
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FOR SALE

- 1959 Hillman Minx de Luxe; one owner; low mileage.
- 1959 Sunbeam Rapier; overdrive; heater; One owner
- 1959 Morris Oxford; low mileage. Very clean.
- 1955 Standard Super 10; good condition.
- 1953 Austin A.30 4-door Saloon. Very clean
- 1950 Citroen Light 15. Very clean car.
- 1949 M.C. 1 1/2-litre Saloon; reconditioned engine
- 1948 Hillman Minx; reconditioned Good

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THE ANSWER

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J. Macrae)—Shall we (the Brora proposal)? o. Stopping the build- nswer to the problem. ntervened to say that getting so serious that rtment were getting called the chairmen of d Housing Committees er the matter with the rtment."

Committee could make they considered neces- the balance of things." greeed to the suggestion the recommendation re- uses for Brora.

"PROTEST RATHER THAN CELEBRATE"

Provost's Feelings on Rail Closure

WHILE there is every indication that there will be a "minor invasion" of Dornoch to-morrow of people wanting to travel in the last train out of the town—the branch line is to be closed with effect from Monday—the Rev. William MacLeod, the provost, is utterly opposed to any suggestion of "celebrating" such a "retrograde step" by the Government. "These people should rather have a day of protest," he told Dornoch Town Council last Tuesday night. Rogart passenger service is also to close on Monday.

Meanwhile, Mr J. M. Rollo, chairman of the Highland Fund, confirmed on Tuesday that the Fund had had to abandon their plans for independent operation of the Mound-Dornoch line as the British Transport Commission's condition was that they would retain all the parcels and goods traffic, which would be a completely uneconomic arrangement.

TRIBUTES

Mr MacLeod paid tribute to the Fund for their initiative, and said he quite appreciated that it would be impossible for them to run the line on passenger traffic alone.

He also paid tribute to Sir David Robertson for his efforts in the House of Commons to get a "reprieve" for this valuable facility.

WOULD BE REJECTED

He would deplore any proposal "to have a special splash" to celebrate the closure, he told the council. The people should show by their actions that they were not going to celebrate in any way.

If there was an invitation to the council to be present to-morrow when the train was to make its last run from Dornoch to the Mound he would turn it down. If they attended they would be "departing from the line we took all along. We have been battling against this closure, and it would, to my mind, be fantastic if we were to go out and gaze at the last train and even travel in it. I do not suppose they would carry us for nothing." (Laughter).

Mr Harry Clunie suggested they might place a wreath in front of the train, and Mr MacLeod commented, amid further laughter, "I believe if you undertook to do that the chamberlain would pay for it."

Earlier, Mr MacLeod had said, "It is an event we should deplore because we are losing an amenity that will not be replaced, and in a very short time it will be seen that however much we did not patronise the passenger service, this idea of bringing merchandise by road from Bonar-Bridge is not such a good idea after all."

HIS FEAR

"I quite believe that in the future there will be no railway at all north of Inverness. Indeed that is already threatened."

However, the Government could not take away the Highlands' natural amenities, nor could they take away those loyal people who would stick by their county as long as they lived.

This closing of the Dornoch branch line and Rogart passenger service was "a strange way" for the Government to implement their White Paper, "Review of Highland Policy." The Govern-

ment had stated that transport services in the Highlands would be "considered," and everyone had taken that to mean they were going to be better off than before. "But 'consideration' means we are going to be worse off than we were before," commented Mr MacLeod.

He added, "As a council we should indicate to the Government that they have embarked on a course that will mean suffering to people in remote parts and will mean also difficulties in supplying the area. The road from here to Bonar-Bridge is not adequate for any more heavy traffic, and in winter it could be closed on occasion for the best part of a week."

NO HELP FROM MINISTER

Baile Jean Chisholm claimed that those responsible for this closure had not exerted themselves to find out things "on the ground." They took "the lazy way out" and said "Why worry about the Highlands?" She added, "They tell us they are going to do so much for us, but the Secretary of State has done nothing to help us."

"BATTLE OF ROADS" NOW

Mr Clunie urged that if they had lost the battle of the railways they should set to and win the battle of the roads, "and pester the life out of the Government until we get what we want. They have committed themselves to roads. Let us see we get them."

Provost MacLeod opposed a suggestion by Miss Chisholm that they should consider acquiring sheds at the railway to be used as a kind of community centre. "I do not think we should accommodate British Railways in any way in the meantime," he said.

(See M.P.'s Protest—Page 4)

Urgent Road Works

SUTHERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL agreed at Lairg last Monday that they would carry on with their plan to send their four-man roads sub-committee en bloc to Edinburgh to urge for a speeding up of road works throughout the county. The fact that there had now been approval for the crofter counties' £246,000 scheme for the Elphin-Ledmore road did not alter the position.

Mr J. P. Whittet, Clashmore, said he thought such a deputation was all the more necessary since the decision to close the Dornoch branch railway and the Rogart passenger station; there would now be heavier road traffic in these areas. The case should be pressed for immediate improvements for such as the Mound-Lairg road and the roads into Dornoch.

The convener, the Rev. William MacLeod, who is also to be on the deputation, agreed that the Mound-Lairg road in the summer months was a "headache."

Mr G. M. Murray — It will be a greater headache now that we are to lose the passenger train service at Rogart.

Old Folks Entertained.—Recently the Rev. Hugh M. Ferrier, of Golspie Free Church, showed a film, "The Life of David Livingstone," to the old folks at (Rhives House. And members of the Free Church Woman's Guild entertained the residents to an excellent tea. Altogether it was a most enjoyable and pleasant evening.

VICE-CONVENER OF COUNTY

Mr W. M. Hames Resigns on Health Grounds

MR JOHN H. MACKAY, Lairg, who is chairman of Sutherland Education Committee is now also vice-convener of county in succession to Mr W. McHames. Durness, who has had to resign from the council on account of health. Mr Hames, who had been county councillor for 26 years, had been able to attend meetings for nine months.

The Rev. William MacLeod, convener paid tribute to Mr Hames's service at the council meeting at Lairg last Friday. "All in all, Morley Hames is one of the most diligent attenders of council meetings. He became convener a considerable time ago. He was vice-convener when the late C. B. Simpson, Helmsdale, was convener and was vice-convener ever since, accepting his resignation with minute our appreciation of his years of service to the parish of Durness to the county."

The clerk, Mr A. J. Macrae, expressed the officials' regret at the resignation which had caused Mr Hames to resign from the council. They wished many happy years ahead.

Mr Hames had been chairman of Planning and Finance Committees also of the salaries and establishment sub-committee.

Mr G. M'Iver, Brora, proposed Mr Mackay, who had had a long association with the council—over 27 years—and was now chairman of the Education Committee, should be appointed vice-convener. He was seconded by D. I. Mackenzie, Tongue, and there was no amendment.

Mr Mackay, replying, said he was greatly honoured by this appointment.

CO-OPTED

It was also agreed, on a motion by Mr J. H. Mackay, that Mr George Campbell, Achins, should be co-opted as Mr Hames's successor on the council. Mr Campbell had contested the election, Mr Mackay said, and had been well supported. He pointed out that co-optation was reasonable in these conditions, especially as the next election was only 11 months away. He was seconded by Mr G. M. Morrison, Bonar-Bridge.

Mr J. P. Whittet, Clashmore, thought there should be an election to give the people of Durness the opportunity to make their own choice. He was seconded by Mr G. M'Iver.

On a vote, Mr Mackay's motion carried by 9 to 6.

DROWNING TRAGEDY

Mr Roddie M'Intyre, one of four men who lost their lives in the recent Gairloch (Wester Ross) drowning tragedy was before the war (our local correspondent writes) well known in Bonar-Bridge, where he was on the staff of the Bank of Scotland.

Aged 40, Mr M'Intyre was married with twin sons, and carried on a grocer's business at Gairloch. On the tragedy two survivors was his brother, Mr. Do-

MOD BROADCAST

On the B.B.C.'s V.H.F. programme from Rosemarkie last Tuesday there was a postscript from last week's Sutherland Jubilee Mod at Brora. Mrs Effie Gunn (secretary), Mrs. MacLennan (tea convener) and Donald Ross (president) talked at all the preliminary work and the problems to be faced through lack of accommodation.