

Northern Times

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1960

HOPE FOR ROGART

MOST people will sympathise with the parish of Rogart in their renewed efforts to keep open the passenger service at their local railway station.

It would appear that the facts of the situation have not been appreciated, or, more likely, have been ignored in the steam-roller process adopted by the British Transport Commission in their reorganisation plan.

It is difficult to see how Rogart can hope to get an adequate bus service in place of what they are going to lose on the railway. A diesel car service, with a conductor and "halt where you please," would have been "just the job" for Rogart, but that economic mode of transport will not be introduced until the B.T.C. have carried out their closure plan.

However, the petition which Rogart has sent out has a good chance of bearing fruit and ensuring that for once justice is done to the small battalions.

VILLAGE STREET OFFICERS

Solving a Problem

THE special scavenging committee for east coast villages have agreed to a scheme for the cleansing of village streets in the area. This does not, however, include Embo, where the present system would be carried on meantime.

The scheme, recommended by Mr E. W. Brannen, county sanitary inspector, provides for a once weekly sweeping of the main streets, and for a once monthly sweeping of other streets in his report Mr Brannen stated, "The whole scheme will require to be carried out in close co-operation with district council clerks. The employee would be under my direct control, and during that part of the year when street sweeping is not so essential his services could be utilised in other ways within the scavenging service." The total cost of the scheme (including Embo) is £488.

The road surveyor (Mr W. Sutherland), at the committee's meeting at Helmsdale last Monday, agreed to the employment of a man on trunk roads at Helmsdale, Brora, Golspie, and half of Bonar-Bridge, whose services would be paid for through his department. The man would be employed in cleaning gully traps and roadsides, and he could have the use of a bantam carrier.

Mr J. O. F. Mackay, Portgower, said that some time ago Helmsdale and Brora were very keen about getting full-time village officers, but the other villages were not. A part-time man would not undertake the work in Helmsdale. They had a full-time man there now.

Asked by whom this man was paid, Mr Mackay thought his wage came from the trunk road fund.

Mr G. M'iver, chairman, said they had no full-time officer in Brora now, and they would have to think of an efficient and economic system of cleaning their streets. It was quite wrong if the Helmsdale employee was being paid for cleaning side streets at the expense of the trunk road fund.

Woman Crofter Gets £25 Expenses

In chambers at Dornoch Sheriff Court last Tuesday, Sheriff-substitute D. V. Irvine Jones awarded £25 expenses to Miss Ann Mackay, crofter, Torroy, Culrain, Ross-shire, against Walter Stewart Murray, crofter, Gossy Neuk, Lairg.

The expenses arose out of a civil action at the end of last June, when Miss Mackay claimed £200 damages from Murray. She alleged that she sustained injury, loss and damage through being assaulted by Murray at Lairg Auction Market on May 14, 1958. Murray then claimed that the sum sued for was excessive and that decree should not be granted. The court ordered Murray to pay £50 damages to Miss Mackay. Before the claim for damages Murray had been fined £12 for the assault on Miss Mackay.

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ROGART FIGHTING FOR RAIL STATION

M.P.'s Support Enlisted : Petition To Keep Passenger Service

THE people of the crofting parish of Rogart are up in arms because their representations that the passenger service at their local railway station should not be closed have gone unheeded by the British Transport Commission.

A public meeting, in Pittentrail Hall, last Monday night, decided to send a petition to, among others, the Secretary of State for Scotland, Sir David Robertson (M.P. for the constituency), Brigadier G. S. Rawstorne (Lord Lieutenant of Sutherland), Col. Cameron of Lochiel (chairman of the Scottish area board of the British Transport Commission), Mr Hugh Fraser (of the Highland tourist development plan), all the political party leaders, the Highland Panel, the N.U.B. and Inverness Town Council. The petition will detail why the people think their station should be open, not only for goods but for passengers.

A sub-committee prepared the petition last Tuesday night.

"UNDEMOCRATIC"

They condemn, principally, the Transport Users' Consultative Committee who received their representations in the first place and did nothing about them. And yet, stated Mr George Murray, Rogart's representative on Sutherland County Council, who presided last Monday night, there was not a single representative on that committee from any place north of Inverness. "That is completely undemocratic," said Mr Murray. Mr Murray's case is that Rogart station has still to be manned for goods traffic, so why should it not continue to be open for passengers? The bus service which is proposed as a substitute is quite ridiculous and inadequate, Mr Murray maintains.

Mr Murray told Monday night's meeting that the British Transport Commission had not "budged one inch" since the first representations were made to them. It was "grossly unfair." Other railway stations to be closed under the scheme were near the main road and had reasonable bus services, but Rogart was off the main road and the bus service was quite inadequate. "Here we are offered this mockery of a bus service as a substitute."

Then Mr Murray said he had written to Sir David Robertson giving him all the details about Rogart.

APPEAL TO M.P.

Mr Murray, in his letter to Sir David, said the proposed bus service showed no consideration for the people of Rogart. And Mr Murray told Sir David that the closing of the passenger service at Rogart station might mean the death-knell of the Fraser tourist development plan for the parish.

Mr Murray also complained that mail would have to come by road now, and in winter this would mean many delays. The local newspaper would have to be arranged for the delivery of newspapers by road from Lairg at his own expense, which would be "grossly unfair."

"It would appear that we taxpayers in Rogart, an isolated area, are to get another kick which will mean further depopulation and depression instead of enjoying the degree of prosperity generally experienced over the country as a whole."

"I am afraid the vicious circle of the law of diminishing returns has applied to the Highlands. On behalf of the people of Rogart I shall be very grateful if you can make representations to the appropriate quarter."

MINDS MADE UP

Mr Murray had told Sir David that it appeared that the Government had no intention of implementing their promises in their "Review of Highland Policy." Sir David had contacted Lochiel, who had said that the British Transport Commission had made up their mind. Sir David had said he was willing to do what he could to save Rogart station.

Mr John Schofield, a civil servant, told the meeting that at present a regular traveller between Rogart and Golspie, a distance of seven miles, would pay £20 a year for a season ticket by rail, but if he went by bus it would

cost him £52. He described the British Transport Commission as "a monstrosity who are a law unto themselves" and who were strangling the life out of small communities in remote areas. Unless the railway provided services for communities, big or small, they were failing in their functions and their organisers "might as well pack their bags and go home."

NOT UNDERSTOOD

Mr Murray alleged that a Highland Omnibuses official had said that they were losing £1700 a year on their Lairg to Golspie bus which goes through Rogart. But, said Mr Murray, Sutherland Education Committee were paying them £933 a year for that service which took children to school at Golspie. How could they possibly be losing £1700 a year in these circumstances?

Mr Schofield said that if the bus service was losing that amount of money, any extra service would also lose, "and so can we expect Highland Omnibuses to maintain the promised service, albeit it is only for three days a week? It is debatable if it will last six months."

And Mr Murray maintained that the road from Lairg to Rogart was not fit for bus traffic in any case. It was a narrow single-track road and in winter liable to be blocked often by snow. Rail passengers for Rogart would be stranded at Lairg, 12 miles away, when they could not get home by bus.

MINISTER'S QUERY

The Rev. J. B. Imrie, Rogart, asked on what good ground the passenger services at Culrain and Invershun stations were to be kept open. "Has that been pointed out to the British Transport Commission? There is to be no passenger station between Lairg and Golspie, a distance of 20 miles, while between Bonar-Bridge and Lairg, a distance of only nine miles, there will be two. If Culrain and Invershun stations are to be kept open we should know the reasons."

Mr Murray replied that all the delegates from the Highland local authorities did feel that Rogart had got the heavy end of the stick. "This is one station they definitely want to retain."

Replying to Mr Simon Leith, Rovie, Mr Murray said the British Transport Commission were not going to consider dieselisation until the closure plans for certain branch lines and stations had been put into effect. "You are going to see diesel trains perhaps only a month after this reorganisation goes into force."

Mr J. Turner said he did not think there was any other place where "you have bus fares in excess of train fares," and he thought that they were going to be gravely penalised through the closure of the Rogart railway passenger service.

NOTE

The single-train fare from Lairg to Rogart is 1/11 (exactly double for return) compared with the bus fare of 2/-, so there is only 1d of difference. But there are no season tickets on this route by bus, whereas there are concessionary tickets for regular travellers on the railway.

HUGH FRASER TO SPEAK AT BONAR-BRIDGE, MARCH 12

MR HUGH FRASER, head of the tourist development plan for the Highlands, will address a public meeting at Bonar-Bridge on Saturday, March 12. Bonar-Bridge is part of one of two experimental areas—the other area is Newtonmore, in Inverness-shire—which will be taken as models for the future. Lairg, Rogart and Invershun also come into the Sutherland pilot area.

Mr Fraser will reveal the details of the schemes which he hopes will be launched to make these villages more attractive places for visitors, and it is expected that he will have some fairly ambitious projects to announce.

Sutherland County Council are playing their part, and the committee concerned have been studying proposals put forward by the county planning officer, Mr D. R. Fasham, who has made an intensive study of all the problems. A general outline of his "new look" proposals has appeared already in these columns.

The Sutherland Tourist Association have launched an appeal for funds to help the organisation, as a start, an information centre at Bonar-Bridge which will indeed operate on behalf of every district in the county and publicise all the accommodation and amenities these districts have to offer. It is for that reason the association have pointed out that the good of all is concerned and that no one can suffer any harm.

Details as to how contributions could be made through the various other

"DELAY" APPEAL TO PREMIER

"Peace" With Marples

THE Prime Minister is to be asked to order a "full and complete inquiry" into the whole question of road and rail transport in the Highlands.

Deciding this at Inverness, on Thursday of last week, Highland local authorities and other interested bodies who have been fighting the proposed closure of certain railway stations and branch lines in the North, made it clear the battle is not yet over as far as they are concerned.

The Sutherland representatives are Mr J. G. Macdonald (Dornoch Town Council), Mr J. P. Whittet (County Council), Mr G. M. Morrison (Dornoch and Creich District Council), and Mr G. M. Murray (county councillor for Rogart).

For two hours the meeting considered the decision of the Scottish Area Board of the British Transport Commission to go ahead with the shut-down, and they agreed to ask that the closures be delayed until an inquiry has been held.

"UNREALISTIC"

At a press conference later, Provost Robert Wotherspoon, Inverness, said—"Extreme dissatisfaction was expressed at the abortive attempt of the B.T.C. to rectify even some of the minor details outlined by Lochiel (chairman of the Area Board) in his letter to us."

Representatives from Rogart and Dornoch had stated in no uncertain terms that the proposed amended bus timetable was impracticable and unrealistic. The proposed withdrawal of the 9.55 p.m. train from Inverness to Tain would result in chaos.

Information had been produced at the meeting to show 9000 passengers a week travelled between Inverness and the North, said the provost, and between 400 and 500 used the Tain train on a Saturday night.

"It would be quite impossible to provide a bus service to transport most of these people on roads which are already over-crowded with tourist traffic," Mr James Cameron, town clerk, Inverness, said. Provost Wotherspoon would be replying to Lochiel's letter, and further action, on which he did not elaborate, would be taken.

"It became more and more apparent throughout the meeting," added the provost, "that the present local difficulties will not be surmounted until dieselisation has been introduced in the Highlands. Until that happens, we maintain there should be no interference with the present service."

"FORGET IT"

Little was said during the meeting about the attitude of the Minister of Transport (Mr Ernest Marples) when the deputation met him in London or about a letter he has sent to Provost Wotherspoon.

"Very little attention was paid to the letter, because we concentrated on the essential matters before us," said the provost later. "It was treated as a personal letter and I didn't even read it to the meeting."

Councillor Donald Mackenzie, Inverness, said, "Instead of threatening personalities, I think we should forget all about 'bloody Scotsmen' and try to get down to the task of getting a proper service for the North."

"By interfering personalities we are not doing justice to the people of the North."

Mr Fasham said that it was not desirable to publicise the other proposed developments until the meeting, later this month, to be addressed by Mr Hugh Fraser himself.

When Mr A. M. Ross, Brora, asked if these developments would be paid for through local rates or be a county charge, Mr J. P. Whittet, chairman, said he did not know and he was asking for estimates now.

Here Mr Fasham said there might be certain work that could be done through the Civic Trust who run summer camps for students. These students supplied the (free) labour. The Scottish Tourist Board would meet the cost of their maintenance. There might be special grants available for certain other works.

When there was a suggestion that the small traffic island at Bonar-Bridge might well be improved it was strongly opposed by the local councillor, Mr G. M. Morrison. It was valuable, he said, because it slowed down traffic and thus prevented accidents.

Mr G. M. Murray was told that Rogart came within the village tidying up scheme, but there would be other schemes later in which the County Council might be interested.

It was agreed that the estimated costs of the projects should be submitted to the relevant committees. The Dornoch and Creich District Council will also be involved in the plans.

"BLACK SPOTS"

At a meeting of the Housing Committee at Helmsdale last Monday, Mr Fasham showed colour films high-

SNOWPLOW BATTLE

Call for "Rotary" Through In

RAILWAY BLOCKI

THE snowstorm, which started on Thursday of last week, was featured by gales and heavy drifting overnight on Tuesday and Wednesday, and reports from all over the county were of snow ploughs waging a heavy and often losing battle as roads closed in behind them.

On the Ork of Caithness they had to give up the fight altogether on Wednesday, so hopeless was the task. A Scottish Home Department rotary plough was summoned from Perth in the morning to try to cut a way through into Caithness, but if it had been even get to Sutherland until this morning, it would have been brighter as reports of road conditions south of Inverness were not favourable.

ABERDENSHIRE FIRST

But there was disappointment for Mr Walter Sutherland, road surveyor later on Wednesday, when he was told the "blower" plough had been re-routed via Aberdeenshire, where it was urgently needed. That meant it might not even get to Sutherland until this morning.

To add to the unhappy story, the railway line was blocked three miles south of Forsinard on Wednesday morning, when a railway snowplough got stuck in a large drift. Late in the

B R R H !

There were 22" of night frost in Dornoch on Wednesday compared with 11" on Tuesday.

afternoon a breakdown squad from Wick were still feverishly working in an effort to get the way cleared and the trains running again. And they succeeded by 6 p.m.—after a hold-up of 10 hours.

Meanwhile, perhaps only the children were welcoming the storm, as many were unable to reach school and rolls were sadly depleted.

PLOUGHS AT STANDSTILL

Traffic between Caithness and Sutherland on the east coast route was still blocked on Wednesday morning, and the ploughs were at a standstill because the snow cuttings were so deep. "Definitely we are not touching this road north of Helmsdale because the work is too heavy for the ploughs," Mr Walter Sutherland told a reporter.

The ploughs cannot get the snow away and now we have called out a rotary snowplough from the Scottish Home Department's headquarters at Perth to try to solve the problem. It will blow the snow off the road on to fields at either side and allow the ordinary ploughs to get going.

"But the question is when will this rotary plough get here? Sutherland County Council have been shouting out in the past that there should be a rotary plough stationed at Inverness for the northern counties, but that has not happened."

"This morning the only road that seems to be completely open is from Helmsdale south to Bonar-Bridge. The Lairg roads are all blocked, and at Tongue, on the north coast, things seem to be serious."

DRIVERS' ORDEAL

Mr J. M. Ross, Sutherland's assistant postmaster, said at Lairg, on Wednesday morning, that the main buses from the north and west had all set out for Lairg, but the Tongue bus driver, Bert Munro, who had arrived there from Bettyhill, his starting point, had been told not to attempt the 40-mile run on this notorious road which is always first to block up in a storm.

"In any case," added Mr Ross, "Bert Munro has been on the road practically all the time in the last two days. On Monday night he got home at 10.30 and last night it was 11 o'clock before he got back to Bettyhill. We have told him to stay where he is until we know what is going to happen."

Eventually, the Lochinver, Scourie and Durness buses got through to Lairg. The postman at Kylesku, in north-west Sutherland, Mr Ian Clark, had to stay overnight on Tuesday at Inchadamph Hotel.

There was more snow and heavy drifting over Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, and that caused the deterioration in the Sutherland was concerned. But in between the snow showers on Tuesday and again on Wednesday there was bright sunshine. Village main streets on the east coast were very treacherous. Main Street in Golspie was one solid sheet of ice, and motorists had to drive with extreme

Misunderstanding

MR GEORGE MURRAY, Morvich, told Sutherland County Council recently that at a meeting of the local

WILFRED TAYLOR FIGHTS FOR ROGART

Eloquent Plea to British Railways

THE people of Rogart, who are fighting to have the passenger service reopened at their local railway station, found a strong supporter in Wilfred Taylor, of "A Scotsman's Log" fame, last week.

He wrote — "We have never been in Rogart although we have passed through it often in the train. It is, or was, in the south-east of Sutherland and the people there have been expressing their indignation because the station has been one of those closed to passenger traffic.

"Not having been to Rogart and knowing nothing about it we feel an urge to share the anger of the people there. Why has it been denied access by rail? Have the inhabitants of Rogart done anything to merit this exclusion from an amenity which they had enjoyed for many years? Any unprejudiced person looking into the complaint will be bound to reach the conclusion that Rogart has been submitted to an injustice.

"What is the situation now? Travellers wishing to go to Rogart will have to complete their journey by bus in all kinds of weather. Why should they be exposed to this intolerable inconvenience? Are they such second class citizens in Rogart that they can be treated with contempt?

"When one thinks what Rogart has contributed to the nation one is all the more appalled by this callous treatment. We know nothing at all about the history of the parish but in the past it is bound to have sent forth some great men into the wider world. Every Highland parish has done so.

"It goes almost without question that there must have been at least one minister in Rogart whose sermons have made a profound impact. We can easily imagine ourself sitting in our pew in the kirk there listening to a thundering voice from the pulpit. It is places like Rogart which have contributed so richly to the theological life of our land.

"If anyone tells us that Rogart cannot boast of at least one school master of outstanding talent we shall flatly disbelieve him. We can see a Rogart dominie now. A selfless teacher and a dedicated scholar, he tirelessly implants knowledge in the minds of the bairns under his care. Who is that bright-eyed, barefooted little boy who seems to hang on his teacher's every word?

"Who is he? Who else but little Murdo who walks three miles to school every day from the little farm up the glen. Had it not been for that unsparing dominie Murdo would not have become one of Rogart's greatest sons. A true lad of parts, he, by dint of hard work, and with the help of bursaries, made his way through Dornoch, Aberdeen University, and Oxford to the exalted position which he held for years.

"It is from places like Rogart that grandeur stems. And think of the girls of Rogart, through the years. Those rosy-cheeked, bonnie lassies, speaking in their lovely Highland lilt. Is their endearing grace to go for nothing? True, many of them are now married and far from Rogart, but

wherever they are will they lightly endure the insult paid to their native parish? Not if we know them.

"Anyone who has ever drunk the milk from a Rogart cow will know that no milk in the world tastes so sweetly. And those eggs which you get in Rogart. Honestly, where else can you find eggs like them? And as for the place itself, on a long May evening when the air is warm and scented, and time seems to stand still, where in the wide world can one match it?

"And yet some men in distant places have consulted some charts and have decided that no more will the wayfarer be able to step from his train and tread jauntily along the platform of Rogart station. One is tempted to wonder if they have taken leave of their senses.

"It isn't only the injustice, it is the indignity which stirs us and other right-thinking people. A station is more than just a place where people get on and off trains. It is a symbol. When you take away a people's station you are offending their pride. You are making them think that they are not good enough to merit the attention of the railways.

"Every time a train rushes through Rogart the inhabitants are going to renew a sense of loss. Even the children will feel that something which is important has gone out of their world. It will no longer be possible to buy a season ticket from Rogart to Golspie, one of the most romantic commuter journeys in the world.

"As a passionate lover of Rogart, as one who dearly wishes that we knew more about it than we do, we warmly plead that this unfortunate decision should be rescinded before it is too late. Thousands of others who have never set foot in Rogart will, we know, share our view.

"As a nation, we must be on our guard. What has happened in Rogart can happen elsewhere. There is no essential difference between Rogart and Edinburgh, save that one is smaller and more helpless. Are we so selfish that we can turn a blind eye on the misfortunes of those less well placed to fight injustice? We are more than happy to provide a platform for Rogart, and we earnestly hope that British Railways will follow our example."

BRORA BRIDGE OFFER

A tender of £21,500 has been accepted by Sutherland County Council for the construction of an underline bridge at the railway level crossing at Golf Road, Brora. They are now waiting for the approval of the Scottish Home Department before proceeding with the work.

SCOTTISH SAVINGS

Gross savings in Scotland during the week ended September 3 last amounted to £4,856,195, compared with £3,496,674 for the corresponding week of last year.

NORTH TRANSPORT POSITION

Rogart Has "Grouse"

A MEETING of Northern local authority representatives was held in Inverness yesterday to consider the transport position following the closure of certain railway branch lines and stations. Sutherland County Council representatives were Mr G. M. Murray, of Rogart, and Mr J. P. Whittet of Clashmore.

When Sutherland Roads Committee met at Golspie recently they were told that the local people wanted the mail bus to leave Lechinver half an hour later in the morning to fit in with the altered time of the morning train arrival at Lairg from the North. This later start would benefit those who had to use this service. Otherwise the service was adequate.

The matter had been raised by the Assynt District Council after the County Council had asked for information wanted by the Highland Panel who were carrying out a public services transport inquiry.

WAIT FOR BUS

Mr D. J. Mackay, who is clerk to Dornoch and Creich District Council, pointed out that the morning train was due at Ardgay at 8.30, but there was no connecting bus for Dornoch until 10 o'clock.

Mr G. M'iver, Brora, the chairman, thought the answer would be a special bus service to meet that need—in other words, an extra bus from Ardgay.

Mr G. M. Murray, Rogart, said his district was also suffering. Their morning service was only the school bus from Lairg. But he was having private talk with a railways official and he did not want to say very much at the moment.

NOTE — Under the British Railways reorganisation scheme Rogart railway station lost its passenger service.

Mr M'iver commented, "Let us be fair. A large volume of people travelling are going to Caithness, and they are very happy about the new position cutting down the time of the train journey."

ROGART GROUSE

It was agreed that Rogart had justification for complaint, and the Rev. William MacLeod, convener, said they should see to it that Rogart had adequate transport facilities, "whether by road or rail."

Major J. H. Weir, Golspie, said that travellers had to sit in the train at Lairg for nearly half an hour.

Mr M'iver — If there was a simple answer that problem would have been solved long ago.

Mr J. H. Mackay, Melvich—Why has Altnabreac station been left open? Rogart seems to be the most unjust case of the lot.

It was agreed that both the Assynt and Bonar-Bridge cases should be taken up with the local bus companies concerned.

Library into House. — Spinningd. Library is to be converted into a two apartment house, and last Friday Sutherland Finance Committee recommended tenders for the work.

KENNETH C. FERGUSON
BOOT AND SHOE REPAIRER

All Types of Repairs carried out

County Council's Building Progress

THE following is the county architect's building progress report for September:—

SCHOOLS

Clyne J.S. School.—The concrete constructional work has been completed as far as possible. Tenders are

pared and tenders for the work will be invited.

HOUSING

Brora Housing Scheme (1959) Twelve houses have now been skaff and the builder is hearing completion of the remainder. Roofs are being constructed, as each block is ready.

AIRMEN CRASHED ON BEN MORE

Volunteer Party To Tend War Grave

THE loneliest war heroes' grave in Britain, 2300ft. up on the boulder-strewn shoulder of Ben More, in the pass of Assynt, is no longer to lack the loving care that is lavished on war cemeteries in more accessible places.

A Sutherland mountaineer, who wishes to remain anonymous, has volunteered to organise a party to tend the grave on Ben More where rest the bodies of six men, the crew of an R.A.F. bomber which crashed on the mountainside during a training flight from Kinloss in 1941.

He made his decision after reading in "The Press and Journal" that the Imperial War Graves Commission had found the grave too remote to receive the attention which they normally bestow on these sacred spots.

VOLUNTEERS?

To begin with, the mountaineer was in doubt as to whether the War Graves Commission would permit him to intervene.

That doubt was quickly resolved. The London headquarters of the War Graves Commission warmly welcomed the offer of assistance, the only condition laid down being that they should be kept fully informed of what was done.

"I will write and ask official permission as soon as I can," the mountaineer said. "Once I have got it, I will go ahead and organise my party. I don't think that I should have any trouble in getting volunteers, for a lot of people in the area have connections with the R.A.F."

The pilgrimage to the grave will not be made until late spring or early summer. At present, conditions are too hazardous for climbers to attempt the ascent.

The grave on the gorse-covered mountain slopes marks the spot where the airmen crashed. They were buried where they fell, and a cairn of rough stones stands out on the hillside to mark their lonely resting place.

Despite the remoteness of the grave, however, the War Graves Commission did not forget their obligation to the airmen. Into the wall of Inchnadamph old churchyard they have built a memorial in their honour.

The six names are recorded on panels of Aberdeen granite, and underneath is a flower trough planted with bell heather.

FROM DEESIDE

One of the airmen was a Deeside man, Sgt.-Observer Charles M. Mitchell, a native of Glenmuick. He was educated at Ballater School and later joined the North of Scotland Bank, with whom he became an accountant and teller.

Brora Cinema

TO-DAY (Friday) at 7.15 p.m.

TO-MORROW (Saturday), at 7.45 p.m.

ROBERT MITCHUM, STANLEY BAKER, ELISABETH MUELLER, and GIA SCALA in

THE ANGRY HILLS

(A)

Admission — 2/6, 2/-, 1/6 and 1/-.

"THINK AGAIN," ROGART TELL B.T.C.

And They Detail Their Case for Keeping Rail Passenger Service

"WHILE it is appreciated that the British Transport Commission have afforded interested parties the opportunity to make representations against their proposals it is felt that these representations have not been reasonably considered."

That is stated in a petition which has gone out to such as the Secretary of State for Scotland protesting against the B.T.C. plan to close the passenger service side of Rogart railway station.

The petition, which is signed by the local county councillor, Mr G. M. Murray, Morvich, calls on those to whom it has been sent "to secure not only a review" of the B.T.C. decision "but also a reversal."

The evidence in the petition, states Mr Murray, makes it "extremely difficult to understand the adamant attitude adopted by the Commission in this matter."

The petition, drawn up by a committee after a public meeting in Rogart earlier this month, attacks the proposed bus service once the passenger side of Rogart station has been closed down.

"The present bus service, two per day each way (Lairg-Golspie, Golspie-Lairg), is inadequate. The proposed alteration in the bus service on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays is unrealistic and unimaginative.

"On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, if the present proposals are brought into operation, passengers arriving in Lairg on the present night train at 7 p.m. will apparently have to stay overnight in Lairg.

HOSPITAL VISITS

"It will no longer be possible to travel from Rogart to Inverness and back by public service in one day. This is of particular importance to relatives of in-patients in Inverness hospitals and would, of course, mean that cheap day return fares are no longer available.

"The Commission's concern appears to be solely one of economics, with little or no regard to the needs or requirements of the public whom they exist to serve.

"The present bus service, operated by a subsidiary of the British Transport Commission, the Highland Omnibus Company, is stated to be losing £1700 per annum on this route, and this despite a guaranteed payment by the local education authority of nearly £1000 per annum. Any increased service is therefore also likely to run at a loss and there is no guarantee that the service will be maintained.

"It is understood that in future the mail will have to be brought by road from Lairg or Golspie, which will add to the cost of the G.P.O. services.

"It therefore seems extremely doubtful whether there will be an overall saving to the Exchequer, as the financial

J.M.B. IN GUNN PLAY

Saturday Night Theatre in the Home Service on Saturday, March 5, will present a recorded repeat of Neil M. Gunn's "Blood Hunt." It concerns an old sea-dog (played by John M. Bannerman) who has retired after a life of adventure to spend the evening of his days in a remote Highland cottage.

cost of stopping the passenger train at Rogart can hardly amount to more than these extraneous items of expenditure—e.g., carriage of mail from Golspie/Lairg to Rogart and carriage paid home goods.

"Between Bonar-Bridge and Lairg, a distance of 10 miles, there are two stations, Culrain and Invershin. Between Lairg and Golspie, a distance of 20 miles, there is none.

SINGLE TRACK

"The road between Lairg and Golspie is a single track road with passing places, for four-fifths of the distance.

"Rogart is the only station on the line which it is proposed to close which is not on the trunk road.

"It is believed that not one member of the Transport Users Consultative Committee is personally acquainted with the area.

"At present newspapers arrive by passenger train. If such trains do not stop at Rogart this may well lead to the district's being without newspapers on occasions.

"Rogart is included in the Fraser plan for tourist development—the closing of Rogart station to passenger traffic is not likely to assist this plan.

"Lairg station is two miles from Lairg village and the present proposals necessitate a change of bus in Lairg. For passengers with heavy luggage this is an added complication."

Farm Management

A few months ago H.M. Stationery Office published a "Farm Management Handbook." A co-operative work by the economists of the Department of Agriculture for Scotland and the colleges of agriculture, it was designed as a tool to aid the Scottish farmer in the running of his undertaking as a business.

In the B.B.C.'s "Farm Forum" programme on Thursday evening, March 3, J. W. Nisbet, Professor of Political Economy in the University of St. Andrews, D. S. Hendrie, Principal of the West of Scotland Agricultural College, G. F. Hendry, an agricultural economist with the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, Frank W. Roger (of Kenly Green, Fife) and William Rose (of Midcoul, Inverness-shire) will try to assess the usefulness of this "tool."

Revaluation Report

"THE progress being made in revaluation throughout Scotland is not unsatisfactory." This is one of the conclusions arrived at by the Scottish Valuation Advisory Council for the year ended December 31 last, and is published this week in their third annual report by H.M. Stationery Office.

The report goes on: "Subject to the continuation of the present co-operation between all parties concerned, we believe that this progress will be maintained in the future, and we found no grounds for recommending a postponement of revaluation such as has taken place in England and Wales, or any major alterations in present arrangements."

Under the 1956 Act, assessors are re-

number of years and these farms are very little about it.

NEW MANAGER

Shaw (Newton Point) said the new manager was willing to take the scheme, "and now he is to be hamstrung—it is very late."

Robertson commented that a 6 per cent reduction did not seem very great but it was a great deal to be completely cut off from these. "Some have been cut off altogether reduced and others left

Shaw—In the past we welcomed and made full use of it. Now, whether wrongly, it is going to be built up more and more, and this is on the edge of the wedge.

Sutherland, Morness—Is it the fact if a farmer takes advantage of grants and improves his farm, does the grants eventually?

Shaw—No. We felt in the past that the members were not getting assistance, but here they are getting it off more and more.

Sutherland—If a farmer got these grants in the past, why do they not get them now?

S. Mackay (Rogart) thought the northern area Agricultural Executive Committee had done their best with the money at their disposal.

BREACH OF FAITH?

Shaw—We are not complaining about the A.E.C., but the complaint is that the A.E.C. has not been obliged to do what they have done.

Robertson—Make a resolution to head-stipulating that we ought to have the same amount of money available before.

Mackay—We knew a year ago that the A.P. would be reduced.

Mr J. R. C. Ballantyne, Creich said that the present position at the Union headquarters were not the thing and the A.E.C. are not following the instructions of the Secretary of State.

"We have to attack on the A.P.—ask if there was a breach of faith if we put a resolution to head-stipulating that we have been misled by the river—and that has been a breach of faith—I think that will produce an effect and headquarters will do into real activity."

Shaw—The N.F.U. and the representative of the Secretary of State are in agreement, but there was a statement. Now we are getting a statement from the N.F.U., but not from the Minister's side.

"A MISUNDERSTANDING"
point Mr I. Weir, secretary, to a statement by Mr Alvan Mackay, president of the N.F.U. of Scotland, the M.A.P. scheme revision. He said that there was still wide standing about the new attitude—too many inaccurate statements were being made, stated Mr Robertson rejected one suggestion that

of farms that had been receiving M.A.P. assistance would be kept under review to see how far, in the light of the other forms of assistance made available since the inception of the M.A.P. Scheme, the number of farms that continued to receive such assistance could be progressively reduced; that the Agricultural Executive Committees would continue to have discretion to adjust the degree of marginality of a holding, and that they would also take into account the benefits derived from other forms of assistance (such as improvement grants under the Hill Farming and Livestock Rearing Acts) and the economics of the enterprise as a whole, including the suitability of the type of farming practised.

REDUCTION

"I can assure you that the Northern Agricultural Executive Committee have carried out their review of the M.A.P. lists in their area in accordance with the principles laid down in the Secretary of State's letter and in the light of such guidance as could properly be given to them by the Department within the principles laid down. The result, as envisaged in the Secretary of State's letter, has been a pruning of lists of recipients of M.A.P. grant and some reduction of expenditure.

"It is estimated that in the Northern A.E.C. Area expenditure under the M.A.P. Scheme will fall from £184,700 for the 1959 cropping year to £174,000 for the current cropping year—a reduction of about 6 per cent. The corresponding figures for Scotland as a whole show a reduction of about 8 per cent. from about £880,000 to £810,000."

"HEDGING"

Mr Shaw—They are now hedging. Some A.E.C.s are increasing their indebtedness to M.A.P.

Mr Ballantyne—Which areas? After it was suggested that Ayrshire was one, Mr Ballantyne said there were appeals being lodged against the new scheme. "My own appeal is in."

Mr Iain Weir, secretary—Farmers have to appeal individually as well as the N.F.U.

Mr Shaw—M.A.P. is our life's blood. It is a trigger that sets off all the other improvements.

Mr Robertson—M.A.P. grants cannot be abused. Farmers must put fertiliser into the ground before they are paid.

Mr Shaw—What is being spent on M.A.P. is a fleabite. In actual fact the only wealth in the North of Scotland is agriculture—it is our only real export. If you prune that you prune everything else.

Mr Gray—Livestock is our biggest export.

Mr Sutherland—We hope every individual farmer will appeal against this.

M.P. and Butlin Walk

SIR DAVID ROBERTSON, M.P., made no attempt to stop the Butlin walk, as we suggested in our issue of February 23 last, but he did suggest that it should be postponed for a week or until the weather conditions permitted its being carried out in safety.

In a letter to the editor of "The Northern Times" Sir David states that he knew the Secretary of State had no powers to stop the walk, "but he has great influence as Home Secretary in Scotland and Minister of Health in Scotland, and no one could have responded more readily than he did to my appeal to support the views expressed by Sutherland County Council which I shared."

In a letter to Mr A. J. Macrae, the clerk, Sir David congratulated the County Council "on the prompt steps which their Finance Committee took to deal with this matter."

V.H.F. BROADCAST

'Helmsdale was the first check point in the Billy Butlin walk, and last Tuesday night two local mother-and-daughter "teams" gave their opinions of this controversial event—in a recording on the B.B.C.'s V.H.F. programme from Rosemarkie. Those taking part were Mrs Levack

ROGART RAIL SERVICE

"Difficult to Run at a Profit"

SIR DAVID ROBERTSON asked the Minister of Transport in the House of Commons last week if he was aware that Rogart railway station was to be kept open for goods traffic but closed to passenger traffic, "to the inconvenience of the local people, over 2000 of whom travelled to and from Rogart last year; and that the four daily passenger trains need to stop for only one minute to put down and pick up passengers; and if he will refer the proposed closure of part of Rogart railway station to the appropriate Transport Users' Consultative Committee."

Mr Ernest Marples—This matter has already been fully considered by the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Scotland.

Sir David Robertson—Since when did it become more important for goods to have precedence over passengers? Surely passengers should have the prior right over goods? If services are kept open for goods, then why not for passengers also?

Mr Marples—This question has been fully considered, but I looked into it myself, knowing your tenacity in supplementary questions. People make 2000 journeys in a year—arrivals and departures—which works out at five or six passenger journeys per day on a total of seven trains per day. That means fewer than one passenger per train—to be exact, .85 of a passenger per train—which makes it difficult to run it at a profit.

COMMITTEE "MISLED"

Mr George M. Murray, county councillor for Rogart, said yesterday that the British Transport Commission had been misleading the area Consultative Committee.

That was evident from the kind of statement which Mr Marples had made in the Commons last week. The Minister had referred to seven passenger trains stopping at Rogart. But there were only six—the seventh ran for only two months in the summer and did not stop at Rogart at all.

Mr Murray said he would give Sir David Robertson all the relevant facts for another approach to the Minister.

MOUND STATION PLEA

At a public meeting in Balvraid School last week it was agreed to make representations to have the Mound railway station continued as an unattended halt for passengers.

Mr R. M'Call, the chairman, who raised the matter, said that while he understood why the Dornoch branch line should be closed, he regretted that the Mound station was to be closed. He saw no reason why it should not be continued as an unattended halt. "We did get up a petition and sent it to the Minister of Transport and to Sir David Robertson."

Ploughing Match at Golspie To-morrow

IT is hoped that conditions will be favourable at Kirkton Farm, Golspie, to-morrow, when the open tractor ploughing match is to be held.

Trophies at stake are the Ross Silver Challenge Cup for the best ploughed rig on the field, and the Cormack Challenge Cup for the junior class (20 years of age and under)—the latter competition is confined to county contenders.

SNOW SHOWERS

Sutherland experienced bitterly cold weather at the beginning of the week, and on Wednesday morning there were

intended to give notice that the burgh's holiday on the links should be at the rates as he thought it only way in which it could be developed. In the end the would benefit, and it might the profit from the park would ease the rates burden. The money by borrowing done for roads.

At present the caravan park do not fall on the rates.

The council had been discussed. The Works Committee recommended the need for more toilet facilities at the park was to be developed. At a Committee meeting it had been pointed out that in view of the large number of caravans at the park, it might have to be very resolute in loss of revenue from dues payable to those catering for the park try in the burgh.

PROPER DEVELOPMENT

The committee had been reported from the North-East of the Caravan Club laying requirements if the Dornoch to be listed in the club's guide.

Mr W. A. Urquhart, treasurer and chairman of the Works Committee, said that as far as this year would be three or four toilets and one additional water supply.

The committee had suggested proper development would be ladies' toilets, at least six men's toilets, washhand basins, water supply, showers, laundries and drying room facilities.

But where was the money from, asked Mr Urquhart, suggested that they might get contributions from such as the town's and hotelkeepers who benefited most from the caravan park.

He reminded the council of the cost of the caravan site borne. They had borrowed from the Common Good Fund, but had to be replaced. "We are digging into the fund to provide facilities for the caravan park money will be forthcoming quarters.

HINT

"We had hoped the position arise where the revenue from the caravan site could be expected ratepayers generally — all time has not arrived yet. We need with some caution. It is that the development has been restricted. If any tradesmen it would contribute the council grateful."

11/3/60



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USERS' COMMITTEE WERE NOT B.T.C. "STOOGES"

Transport Ministry's Reply in Commons to M.P.'s Rail Closure Protest

HERE was literally no Parliamentary control over the railways, Sir David Robertson told the House of Commons last week. He was protesting against the British Transport Commission's decision to close Dornoch branch railway and Rogart passenger service, and he added that this question of control would have to be debated in the very near future.

The Minister of Transport was powerless under the Act. On the one occasion he had gone to see the committee's secretary he was surprised to find him sitting in a room almost across the corridor from the general manager of British Railways in Scotland. The secretary is a railwayman. He has spent most of his life on the railways and he was appointed to this job, which strikes me as wrong. The committee is supposed to represent the passengers, the people who do all the millions of miles of passenger journeys, and the freight users.

DISADVANTAGE
"I should have thought that a man who had served most of his active life on the railways was most unsuitable to be put into a job of that kind. He is bound to look at things through railway eyes. I have no doubt of his integrity, but he almost starts in a prejudiced fashion.

"I have the latest report which has been issued by the committee, and I find that it has 25 members, including the secretary, but that there are hardly any members for the Highlands. "This is the body which decides our fate. Transport, which is the key to all Highland development, is in the hands of people most of whom, apparently, come from south of Inverness.

"There are two farmers, representing agriculture. They are not from the Highlands. There are six gentlemen representing commerce and industry. There is only one man in that list, the managing director of McGruther and Marshall, Limited, from Inverness and his offices are in the same building as the British Transport Commission in Inverness. I imagine that his company must be tenants.

"I do not know what shipping has to do with a consumers' council which is supposed to look after passengers and freight, but I see that there is a representative of the coastal shipping firm, J. Hays and Sons, Limited, Glasgow.

"There are two gentlemen representing labour. One is the general secretary of the Scottish Union of Bakers and Allied Workers. The other is a member of the General Council of the Scottish T.U.C. and of the Divisional Council of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

"There are about six representatives of local authorities and one of these is the convener of Inverness-shire. So we have him in addition to Mr Mackenzie, of McGruther and Marshall, Limited.

FULL-TIMERS
Sir David explained that at the time about which he was speaking "Sir Ian Bolton was the chairman of the Scottish Board of the Transport Commission and he had a strong team of officials,

including, besides himself, Mr Young, the divisional manager, Scottish Division, British Road Services; Mr James Ness, general manager, Scottish Region, British Railways; and Mr Amos, chairman of nationalised Scottish Omnibuses, Limited — four full-time officers, the highest in Scotland of the Transport Commission, representing railways and bus services. With Mr Reid, they would be an effective bloc on any committee. These are the full-timers.

"All the others are part-timers, men who come to a meeting two, three or perhaps four times a year. There are two ladies on the committee, one from Aberdeenshire, who is chairman of the Scottish Committee of the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds, and another lady, Miss McKenzie, from Aberdeenshire County Federation.

"I make no imputations against any of these ladies or gentlemen, but I believe that they are at a distinct disadvantage in having to face a bloc of full-time operating managers of the railway and the bus services. These latter cannot be regarded as wanting what the passengers and freight users may want. They are obviously there because of their association with the B.T.C.

"I have been looking at the first page of the report for the 12 months ended 31st December, 1958. The committee held four quarterly meetings, one special meeting and one sub-committee meeting, and one extraordinary feature arises. It says that during the year Mr Donochy, who was a member of this committee, had retired on being appointed a member of the Scottish Area Board of the B.T.C.

"ASTOUNDING"
"That surely is an astounding situation. An independent representative on this part-time committee is promoted to go on to the operating board, the commercial managers, of the railways in Scotland. I would not have thought that this committee was a natural ground for promotion of that kind.

"The House should pay some attention to this Committee, because it is apparent that all local authorities in the North are extremely distressed with the situation. They cannot get any redress from this House or from Ministers, and they certainly do not get it from this committee.

"All the local authorities in the North, from Inverness to Caithness, combined under the leadership of Provost Wether- spoon and vigorously protested against the closures, making representations to Ministers in writing and endeavouring to make them to the Minister of Transport here — but all without success. They have not achieved anything during this long period.

"At Rogart, in my constituency, the service is to be left to two full-time men. When I asked the Minister of Transport to intervene with the Commission — I asked the Commission first of all, but it refused — to urge that all trains should stop for one minute at Rogart and at other stations similarly situated, he refused to do so.

"Trains pass under this House at a rate of about 60 an hour every day. A rate of more than one minute is seldom required. The Commission will not let the Highland trains stop for one minute. There is no problem about tickets. They could be sold from a slot machine or by the guard or the conductor; there is invariably a conductor.

ROGART'S LIGHT
"But the preference is for goods. There is not to be preference for passengers. They are shut out. What are people like crofters and agricultural workers to do? They cannot afford a special take the road from Rogart to Rogart. The alternative is to walk or try to find a bed for the night. That will not be much encouragement to tourists either, I should imagine.

Rail and Bus Service Assurance

CONTRARY to what had sometimes been said, the British Transport Commission's reorganisation scheme for North rail services was not a step towards the closure of the Inverness-Wick main line "but an attempt to avert such a drastic step."

"That was stated by the Scottish Area Board of the B.T.C. last week, and they added that the road and rail services "to be provided this summer will be carefully watched to ensure that any necessary adjustments can be introduced without delay."

"Now for the alternative train and bus services. People who live at Rogart and work out of that area are faced with very great difficulties. "Of course, the bus service will lose money. The service is unsatisfactory to my constituents and it will lose money. No one knows that better than Mr Amos, the general manager. So all we are doing is we are saving something on the nationalised railways and part of the saving we are losing on the bus services.

"HEAVY TASK"
Replving, Mr John Hav, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, said that the Transport Users' Consultative Committees, "which are representative of user interests and are selected on that basis, have a very heavy task in weighing this inconvenience or hardship, on the one hand, against the cost to the Commission of retaining rail services, on the other. "These people give their time and services voluntarily and, as I know from examination of the minutes, and often the verbatim records, it is quite untrue to say that they go into committee with a bias in favour of the British Transport Commission. It is very often the other way round, as one would expect, because they are committees of users of the services.

"I may be tempted to say that these committees are stooges of the British Transport Commission. In the case of the Scottish Committee, there are three members who represent the Highland area, but I appreciate that possibly this is considered to be insufficient. We now have in mind the possibility of appointing an additional member to represent Highland interests on this committee.

ROAD BENEFITS
Mr Hay claimed that the road benefits would be substantial recompense. "Some 50 extra bus journeys per week will be provided, a number of bus services will have changes in timing to make them more convenient, and better connections will be made with the other bus services and with the rail services at Inverness. This is not a particularly difficult operation, because the bus services are provided by Highland Omnibuses, Limited, a company controlled by the British Transport Commission.

"So far as freight is concerned, British Road Services are extending their network in this area and will cover all the places which have heretofore been served by the stations about to be closed, provided that they are more than 4 1/2 miles from the nearest alternative station."

Explaining the legal position of the Minister of Transport, Mr Hay said, "Under the Transport Act, 1947, the position is that if the Transport Users' Consultative Committee make a formal recommendation to the Minister, then, and only then, has the Minister the power to give the British Transport Commission such a direction. In this case, the Scottish Committee gave no formal recommendation. It did not say to the Minister, 'These proposals are wrong and we recommend against them. On the contrary, it said that they are right."

"POWERLESS"
"In the absence of a recommendation from a committee, the Minister has no power. He had no power then and he has no power today to intervene. We have to operate in accordance with the law laid down by Parliament, and the Minister has no power at all to step in and ask for these closures to be postponed or forgotten altogether. With the best will in the world, I must tell the House quite frankly that we are powerless in that situation.

"The Commission has made no secret of its belief that these closures are essential in the interests of maintaining the main line north of Inverness. If these lines continue to lose money in this way — and the Commission made no bones about this — it would be obliged to consider closure of the main line north of Inverness altogether.

"One has to pay attention to the alternative bus services being provided. We are enormously improving and extending the road network in the Highlands and I hope that by that method the road network will in future be as good as they have been in the past, albeit on road rather than on rail."

who, it is hoped, will be visiting the North in the coming number."

The Board believed that the economy scheme would "not only help to keep this (Inverness-Wick) line in operation, but will also provide a faster and better co-ordinated rail and bus service. Their proposals were approved by the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee after the most careful inquiry. "Later in the year it is intended to introduce diesel locomotives which will enable the Scottish Region to improve still further the service from Inverness to the North."

GRANNY'S HEILAN H TO GET GRANT

"Cut Off" From Licensed Premises

THE Department of Health have ruled that plans for Granny's Heilan Hame tourist development at Embo "show that the dwelling-house will be completely self-contained and separate from the licensed premises in the same property, and it is open to the County Council to grant the application for improvement grant, subject to the usual conditions."

At a previous meeting the council had decided that the plans were not clear about this and had submitted them to the Department. At last week's council meeting the Rev. William MacLeod, convener, asked if this was a "tied" house, and he was told it was not and that a rent would be charged by the sponsor of this licensed restaurant scheme, Mr John Mackintosh, Embo House.

Here Mr Hugh Steele, assistant sanitary inspector, intervened to say that the question of access from a house to licensed premises did not impair an improvement grant—it could still be granted. Grants had been given in the past to places where the house was attached to a licensed shop.

INFORMATION WANTED
Mr G. M'IVER, Brora, said that such a house would have no relationship to the business in the shop. But was that the case here? "Will cooking (for the restaurant) be done in the house?" Mr Steele—No.

Here Mr M'IVER said he was not objecting to this grant if there was a clear dividing line between the licensed premises and the house. He had known of a case where a man who had ultimately got a licence had to repay the improvement grant. "I am not against this proposal, but have we all the information?"

Convener—Who is to occupy this house? I heard it was to be for the barman. Mr M'IVER—I think we should be careful.

Mr Steele—As long as the house is rented it does not matter to us—as long as it is not a tied house. Convener—This part of the house is supposed to be for the person who is in charge of the public bar.

Mr Steele went on to say that this improvement grant was for a house entirely separate from the licensed premises. There was a kitchen attached to the restaurant, for supplying meals in. "There is a scullery attached to the house entirely separate. That scullery will not be used for making restaurant meals."

Convener—We are not clear whether this dwelling-house is in reality to be a house only rented to the person in the service. **RENTED HOUSE**
Mr Steele—If it is to be a rented house, then it has got to be a rented house. It cannot be rented with a proviso. That is one of the legal questions that is tied up afterwards.

Here Mr J. P. Whittet, Caishmore, said he had been told this was a straightforward let. Mr M'IVER—So long as it is clear. Mr G. Fraser, Dalchiel — You have repeatedly given grants in similar circumstances. Major J. H. Weir, Golspie—I move we give the grant.

That was approved. **REPORT NOT READ**
Here Mr Steele commented, "I am quite happy about that. In future, when **CLAN MACKENZIE**
To the Editor, "The Northern Times" Dalmore, AIness.

SIR—On June 25 there is a Gathering of the Clans at Inverness, when the world piping contest takes place, and this is being organised by the various clan societies throughout Britain. Various Mackenzie societies have been formed throughout the British Isles and overseas; recently one has been formed in Inverness, but Ross-shire, the home of this greatest northern clan, has no association. It is essential that this position be remedied forthwith, and it hoped that all who bear the name of Mackenzie or who are in any way affiliated with this clan will get in touch with the secretary, Major H. A. C. Mackenzie, M.C., T.D., Dalmore, AIness, Ross-shire, so that a Ross and Cromarty Association may be formed. Yours, etc. H. A. C. MACKENZIE.

More Central—A public convenience is to be provided as soon as possible on a site adjoining the car park at Loch-Inver. This will be the second such public convenience to be provided for Loch-Inver out of public funds. The other one was built at Culag Pier at a cost of £700. The new one is estimated to cost £900.

you have difficulty to happen, might I from the technical of the council meeting saved you writing to that had been done report, I said this is separate from the licensed premises—That is Mr Steele—That referred to in the minutes. Clerk, Mr A. J. M'IVER (the county architect could not answer the question put to him.

Mr Whittet—The report says that the grant will be used to repay it if he puts into this house, Mr Steele—That is Major Weir asked that Mr Mackintosh about the success of grant as soon as possible. Convener—He will soon as the office of he will be told that he will be a tied house. It was indicated, rent was £15.

Exhibition
The exhibition of relics which proved an interesting attraction during last week recently again during the month. The Town Council ran the exhibition being and give a matter.

At the council meeting, Rev. William MacLeod said he understood articles which could be increased and the exhibition could be during the summer of the day. There is a favourable comment worthwhile to make holiday season.

Baile Jean Chalmers was to have an interview with the clerk, Mr Steele, to ensure the success of the exhibition. He suggested that every turn at being open in the evening. The sub-committee Chisholm, comprising Clunie, Treasurer, Councillor A. MacLeod.

BABY'S
FOUR MONTHS
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STILL FIGHTING FOR ROGART STATION

Appeal to Scottish Secretary—And New Case for Reopening May be Urged

SUTHERLAND Roads Committee agreed at Lairg last Monday that the British Transport Commission should be asked for an assurance that they had no intention meantime of dismantling Rogart railway station, which is now closed to passenger traffic. The committee felt that such an assurance is urgently necessary since negotiations are still going on for the reopening of the passenger service at Rogart. Experience over the last four months, they say, shows that the alternative bus service is not reasonably adequate.

Mr J. P. Whittet, Clashmore, who, with Mr G. M. Murray, Rogart, attended a Northern local authorities' meeting at Inverness last month to discuss transport questions, said there had been no conclusion. But there was a proposal to have further meetings; that would depend on the respective councils.

"QUITE FANTASTIC"

Rogart had been their biggest problem. "The situation seems to be quite fantastic there. I think we should try to get the passenger service at Rogart railway station reopened." He had been proposed as one of the members who would continue on this northern transport committee—to represent Dornoch and Rogart interests.

Mr Murray—This matter should be treated with urgency. Unless something is done they (the British Transport Commission) may start stripping Rogart station.

Here Mr Murray went on to discuss difficulties confronting Rogart travellers. There was a case where a traveller had to stay overnight in Lairg "It is ridiculous when trains are passing their own doors." He was not pleading the case on sentimental grounds. "There is not the slightest doubt that the geographical situation of Rogart makes everything much worse than at other stations which have been closed."

APPEAL TO PRESS

Mr Whittet—I think it would do good if the press will give as much publicity as possible to this. We want the public to put in their complaints to the county clerk. Otherwise, it is difficult to go to meetings lacking such information.

Clerk, Mr A. J. Macrae—If there is urgency about Rogart station we should act now.

Mr G. M'IVER, chairman—Let us tell the British Transport Commission that we hope, since negotiations are still continuing for the reopening of Rogart station, that they will take no action to dismantle the building meantime. Indicate to them that we are aware of the possibility of the station being dismantled.

Mr Murray—They will just tell you the Transport Users Consultative Committee have recommended the closing of Rogart station.

Mr M'IVER—Approach the British Transport Commission.

Mr Whittet—We were told there would be a reasonable alternative road service. Experience has now shown that the alternative service is not reasonable. Surely that could give us an opening to go back to the users' committee and complain.

Mr M'IVER—I agree that we should complain through that committee, but the possibility of Rogart station's being dismantled is another question.

Mr Murray—Let us be fair to the bus company. They are trying to make the best of a chaotic situation that has been created by the British Transport Commission.

Mr M'IVER—Mr Whittet will continue to deal with this question.

READERS' VIEWS

(To the Editor "The Northern Times")
SIR,—Regarding last week's correspondence about Rogart station, the crux of the matter is surely this. Rogart station is still there—so are the railway staff—and so indeed is the line itself, only recently heavily repaired at that very point. Why, then, disrupt this area and inconvenience anyone in the name of economy.

Those with common sense among us realise that the whole line north of Inverness is scheduled to be closed within so many years—but surely until such time as these plans are properly conceived and adequate alter-

GRASSED A "ROYAL"

Eighteen-year-old Alick Ross, under-gamekeeper with Cambusmore Estates, grassed a "Royal" recently—a stag with 12 points on its antlers. And this was his first attempt at stalking.

native modes of transport worked out, three minutes at Rogart station are not too much to ask! I'm sure Catholic travellers wouldn't mind!

May I add as a rider—had the local representatives fought the case on its own merits in the first instance, instead of flogging another dead horse (which should have been dead 25 years before anyway), Rogart station might still be open.—Yours, etc.

PRO-ROGARTIAN.

SIR,—As they struggle home on their bicycles from Lairg or Golspie, I wonder how much consolation Rogartians derive from the reflection that Mr Murray, in Argyll, is spread the discomforting thought of a stop at Rogart station when he journeys north, "I now feel relieved that my train no longer stops there!"

Should they be overtaken by rain or snow, with what degree of patience will they think of a Broca councillor's exhortation, "Let us be fair — they (Cathnessians) are very happy about the new position."

The new position affects my personal convenience not a whit. But when I am in Rogart, particularly when I find myself near the War Memorial and the deserted station, I am "sentimentally naive" enough to feel, like Wilfred Taylor, an urge to share the community's indignation and to echo the wish of your Stonehaven correspondent—"Would that the egregious British Railways' contribution to the nation were of the same order as Rogart's sacrifice."—Yours, etc. A.M.

TALK ON SHEEP

Mr J. MacGillivray, agricultural adviser for Sutherland, and Mr Morris Pottinger, of Reay, discussed wintering of sheep in the B.B.C.'s W.H.F. programme from Rosemarkie last Tuesday night. The programme was introduced by Mr J. W. Grant, regional director of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture.

Crofters' Union Are "Under Fire"

AN appeal to crofters to join the Sutherland area of the National Farmers' Union was made by "Sandy" in last week's issue of "Farming News." He takes a very poor view of the effort to form a crofters' union and describes the idea as "something in the nature of an old man's dream that may never happen and, if it ever does get beyond the first pangs of birth, may pass away like snow off a dyke." He could see very little in it but "misdirected effort!"

"The great majority of the crofters present are in the Sutherland branch of the N.F.U., which Union being a democratic body in a crofting county means that they control the Union and have never let up in the constant struggle to improve conditions in agriculture.

"If there are any crofters in remote parts who are unaware of the existence of the Union (N.F.U.) in Sutherland, I can assure them of a very warm welcome in the ranks of the working crofters, where month after month and year in and year out the work goes on, helping individuals with their problems

and feeding through to a live organisation the day-to-day information so vital to the existence of a prosperous agricultural industry."

OFF THE LEASH

Golspie Senior Secondary School and Dornoch Academy, who went on their mid-term holiday yesterday, return to duty next Wednesday

GOLSPIE MOTORS LTD.
All Enquiries invited at STATION ROAD, GOLSPIE
or Telephone GOLSPIE 205

AUSTIN A40
SMALL CAR WITH BIG IDEAS

BONAR TRIBUT TO POSTMAN

And Jimmy To Get Medal Later

OVER 50 people assembled in Caledonian Hotel, Bonar-Bri last Monday evening, to honour retired postman, Mr James Holm "Jimmy," as he was affection known in every household which served in the Migdale district route over 40 years.

He was piped into the hotel by Majors Hugh Grant and Alex Murray, Mr W. B. Urquhart was c man.

Mr Urquhart referred to Mr Holm many fine qualities, and to the fair and conscientious way in which he carried out his duties.

Then came the high-light of evening, the presentation ceremony and the feature was that it conc two of the district's oldest inhabitants Mr John Calder, Cannabod, and James Cameron, Migdale, who are over 90 years of age. They had

Letters to Editor — Pages 4, 5

honour, on behalf of the many subscribers and well-wishers, to send to Mr Holmes a wallet containing a substantial sum of money.

Each in turn paid his tribute, and without a good deal of wit and humour Mr D. J. Mackay proposed the of the evening, and all joined in Mr Holmes a very long and retirement.

Mr Holmes expressed his appreciation of such a thoughtful gesture, and that he would remember that for the rest of his days.

Other speakers were Messrs Calder, A. Ross, G. Macleod, K. Kinnon, W. A. Calder, T. Bow Calder and G. Murray (an ex-colleague). It was most evident the sincere tributes to Mr Holm; the district had lost not only a postman but a valued friend.

AWARD

Mr W. Craig, head postmaster spoke of Mr Holmes's service to Post Office, and intimated, to the light of the company, that Mr H was to be awarded the Imperial Victoria Medal which he hoped to possess.

After tea the singers were Dr Ross, A. Cameron, W. A. Calder, B. Bowie, and, last but not least, "Ji" himself. Piping selections were by Pipe-Major Grant, and violin selections by Sandy Murray.

Later there was a dance, at the pipers again supplied the music.

And a most memorable evening with the company singing "For I Jolly good fellow," "Haste ye ye 'Will ye no' come back again," "Auld Lang Syne."

PROPERTY FOR SALE

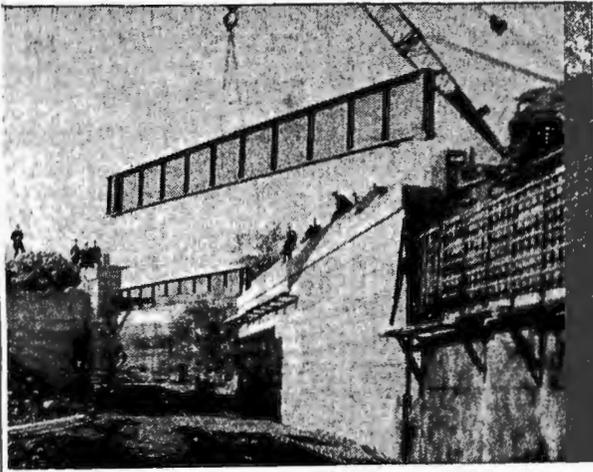
MUIR OF ORD

FOR SALE, Detached House, known as Heatheries, Muir of Ord, G. Floor—Lounge, dining-room, 1 bed kitchen, hall and bathroom; first floor 3 bedrooms and toilet. Large garden and outhouses. Assessed Rental, Free-duty, £2. Persons wishing to apply to Duncan Logan Builders Great North Road, Muir of Ord, whom offers should be lodged before 29th October, 1960.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

GOLSPIE

FOR SALE, by Private Bid (owing to death of former proprietor) Old-established Ladies' and Gent's Attire Business at Olsson House, Street, Golspie, which belonged to late Donald Murray, together with heritable property (with glass front facing Main Street of 25 feet). 1 lent site, with ample room for extension. Stock at valuation. Assessed Rent, £20; Free-duty, £1 10/-; Immunity. For further particulars apply to MACKENZIE & CORMACK, Solicitors, Dornoch, who will receive offers. No. Dornoch 248).



Guiding into position one of the main girders at the new bridge being built at Strathsteven on the trunk road. See story on this page.

C.D. CONTROL CENTRE PROVISION

Cost May Require 100 Per Cent Grant

IF the Government wanted an "ideal" civil defence control centre for Sutherland they might have to foot the bill, the Rev. William MacLeod, convener, last Monday told the county's Civil Defence Committee at Lairg. This was a national concern.

"If we are to go on, step by step, like this, we may be landed with a tremendous financial burden which would not be warranted by the nature of this county and its geographical position."

Sgt. I. MacLeod, civil defence officer, had put before the committee a note from the Scottish Home Department on the planning of control centres. "This information shows," he said "that a very large building would be required for the ideal control centre."

Mr G. M. Morrison, chairman—The question is, are we able to bear the cost? We might want a 100 per cent grant for this.

Mr MacLeod—If they want ideal premises for a county like this we may not be able to provide them, unless they bear the financial responsibility.

Mr Morrison said he had already indicated that to those concerned. "But nothing can be done unless we push it from this end. Put the recommendation to the county council."

Mr MacLeod—We should have actual figures of all the costs. Then we would be able to make a better show of our request.

Mr Morrison—The civil defence officer can look into it.

Earlier Mr Morrison had told the committee that the civil defence officer considered it was necessary to go ahead with the extension of the present premises if they were going to have a proper control centre there.

Sgt. MacLeod—We feel that for our present training needs we require extra space provided by proposals which were presented before the committee. This extension is necessary if we are adequately to meet our indoor training requirements.

This would be essential, said Sgt. MacLeod, whether or not at a future date they look over the Dornoch railway station premises. So far as a control centre was concerned, the premises at Murray Road, Dornoch, could not provide that, but they would provide very suitable facilities for training nevertheless.

Mr Morrison—If you go ahead would that be the final thing?
Sgt. MacLeod—At the June meeting I outlined what the space requirements would be for the operational set-up. At the same time, I pointed out that our present space at Murray Road would still not be large enough. But I did maintain that at a push these premises could be useful. It will be appreciated that a control centre as such would require to be a very large building indeed.

Mr MacLeod—Let us press the British Transport Commission for an early reply to our proposals.

Sgt. MacLeod—There is no building in which we could exercise a control centre team. The only suitable building for that purpose is the administrative block of offices and waiting rooms, but even that is much too small to be considered.

It was agreed to recommend that the training hut at Bonar-Bridge should be made suitable as a training centre, at an estimated cost of £310. There is a 75 per cent grant.

Pipers' Tribute

MRS M. F. MURRAY, Balloan, wife of the late Mr John Murray, one-time provost of Dornoch, was featured in the B.B.C.'s V.H.F. "Town and Country" programme from Rosemarkie last Tuesday night.

A great supporter of the local pipe band, she heard a tune composed in her honour by Pipe-Major K. Macrae. From Golspie officials of the North of Scotland Blood Transfusion Unit talked about their recent visit to the area.

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EA GOLSPIE'S CHANCE NOW TO CAUSE UPSET

But Helmsdale United Must be Confident

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annual d's Day utherland iring next ip of the airg. The Rev. D.

HELMSDALE UNITED, the Aunt Sally of Sutherland football at the moment—they are undefeated so far and every club want to be the ones to knock them down, as it were—are at home to Golspie to-morrow in the Pattison Cup League.

United got rather a fright at Dornoch last week, and Golspie, who scored seven goals against Brora Rangers, may feel they have the ability to blot their opponents' record. It should be a rousing contest, but United must be favourites.

Lairg Rovers, who did very well to take a point from Bonar-Bridge last week, will be confident that they can go one better to-morrow and defeat Dornoch, whom they entertain at Lairg. But a division of the points here would not be surprising.

Bonar-Bridge will not be blamed for thinking that they are on an "easy thing"—they are at home to the wretched Brora Rangers—but Rangers are going to cause a turn-up one of those days, and the spectators at Ardgay may be the first to see their recovery.

Golspie Hit Seven

Golspie Sutherland 7, Brora Rangers 1. GOLSPIE SUTHERLAND ended their lean spell with a resounding victory over Brora Rangers in this Pattison Cup League match at Golspie last Saturday.

Rangers were not quite as bad as the score suggests, for in the second half especially they fought back well against the wind, but invariably their forwards were caught offside, and at other times poor finishing spoiled their efforts.

Fifteen minutes from the end, Norman Brown, Brora's outside left, had to leave the field with a knee injury.

A. Fraser, playing at inside left, had three goals for Golspie. A. Macrae (2), Jack and J. Mackay were the other

Golspie scorers. Pryde had Brora's consolation goal from the penalty spot. Teams—

Golspie Sutherland—W. Murray; T. Macrae and W. Henderson; A. Macgregor, I. Macrae and I. Macdonald; D. Jack and A. Matheson; A. Macrae; A. Fraser and J. Mackay.

Brora Rangers—W. Innes; I. Macleod and S. Ross; G. Macleod, J. Innes and D. Macleod; D. Fraser and D. Pryde; D. Brown; D. Gunn and N. Brown.

Referee—W. N. Manson (Torboll).

All Square

Bonar-Bridge 2, Lairg Rovers 2.

Lairg Rovers surprised their opponents by sharing the points in this Pattison Cup League match at Ardgay last Saturday. Rovers, who held the whip-hand in the first half, led 2-1 at the interval, their first goal being converted

POSITION OF THE CLUBS

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Helmsdale	5	5	0	0	35	4	10
Bonar-Bridge	5	3	1	1	13	13	7
Dornoch	5	2	3	0	8	19	4
Golspie	4	1	2	1	11	8	3
Lairg Rovers	3	0	1	2	3	12	2
Brora Ran.	4	0	4	0	6	20	0

by a Bonar defender. A. Matheson had the other.

The Bonar-Bridge goals were scored by Oates. Teams—

Lairg Rovers—I. Macleod; D. Matheson and D. Macleod; I. Ross, H. Macdonald and D. Snody; I. Fraser and A. Matheson; W. Mackay; H. Jack and H. Macnab.

Bonar-Bridge—A. Ross; D. Macpherson and A. Meiklejohn; J. Munro J. Campbell and A. Campbell; A. Sinclair and L. Macdonald; J. Urouhart; D. Oates and C. Forbes.

Referee—D. Macleod, Brora.

'Dale's Hard Fight

Dornoch 2, Helmsdale United 3.

DORNOCH made a very commendable effort to halt the victorious march of Helmsdale United in this Pattison Cup League match at the Meadows Park, Dornoch, last Saturday. Indeed, it was only in the last five minutes that United scored the deciding goal, so that was how near Dornoch came to making a name for themselves. The score was 2-1 in Helmsdale's favour at the interval.

United complained that whenever their forwards got on the move their advance was held up by the referee blowing them up for offside. That was certainly frustrating, but surely the referee was not always wrong.

Beaton, Jappy and John Sutherland scored for Helmsdale and Christy Fraser and Mackintosh for Dornoch Teams—

Dornoch—R. Mackay; W. G. Mackay and A. Macdonald; D. Macleod, D. Bethune and D. Balfour; S. Mackenzie and A. Mackay; C. Fraser; A. Grant and M. Mackintosh.

Helmsdale United—R. Sharpe; J. Sinclair and S. Cowie; John Sutherland, I. Innes and K. Sutherland; T. Mackay

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ROGART STATION

Glasgow, 20th October.

SIR, — Rogartians must have noted with rueful surprise that the reader who writes, "I now feel relieved that my train no longer stops there (Rogart)," bears the surname Murray.

This British Railways apologist should think again. That body's policy of wholesale contraction is inconsistent with performing a truly national service. It must begin to think and act on positive lines.

Wilfred Taylor, who makes so many perceptive entries in his famous "Log," has never written to better purpose than in pleading Rogart's cause. He has long been a staunch advocate of a moderate measure of devolution for Scotland. It is inconceivable that the plight of small, defenceless communities like Rogart could be worse if Scottish, and particularly Highland, affairs were dealt with by a sub-Parliament in Edinburgh. Yours, etc.—J. R.

SIR, — Mr Hugh Macpherson's letter in your valuable paper of October 14 will interest many throughout the world.

Mr Wilfred Taylor's letter was a masterpiece and the spirit of the letter in such beautiful, plain language, would be understood by even a child. No "dog-eared" dictionaries for him.

It is unfortunate that some people write most excellent literary efforts, but are so short of the facts that they are useless.

Rogart station had 5000 passengers last year, but gets closed, yet look at the stations that remain open. In Caithness, Altnabreac, with nothing but moors and desolation — and a Reay station—no passengers. In Argyll, Gorton—there, indeed, there is no church, no monastery, no doctor, no shop—yet we find a railway station, and, of course, no passengers. A symbol? — it must be.

Surely in these times of atomic energy something could be done to relieve our fellowmen from a life that is one constant vigil, in places that are unfit for human habitation unless one loves a life of absolute solitude.

British Railways must have many more such places. Why not do something about such uninhabited places before closing stations like Rogart?

The tractor is our only dependable means of travel meantime—no wonder the ponies are overworked. Yours, etc.—A. M.

Dounreay Scientist Killed on Road

A DOUNREAY scientist was killed and two men and a woman were seriously injured when a car and a bus were in collision near Lybster last Tuesday.

Killed was Dr George MacLennan, 134 Pennyland Drive, Thurso, a 28-year-old senior scientific officer at Dounreay atomic station. A native of Dingwall, he was a married man with one son.

The injured, also employed at Dounreay, were taken to Dunbar Hospital, Thurso. They are Mr Alexander Simpson (24), chemist and Mrs Simpson (24), haematologist, 47 Heathfield Road, Thurso, and Mr Edwin Morris (28), chemist, 20 Calder Drive, Thurso, Mrs Simpson was driving the car.

The bus driver and passengers

Store for Lochinver

d district : them— they will s, Rosa- ry-teller. her own moments .l live in by great nth cen- by Miss r in the

End productions, including a season of Shaw plays with Esme Percy. In Donald Wolfitt's Shakespeare seasons she played Juliet, Lady Macbeth, Portia, Rosalind and Beatrice. She has acted opposite other famous men, including Alec Guinness, Robert Donat, Emyln Williams and Eric Portman.

Her tour of Scotland is arranged by the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council.

Soccer Fixtures

The following are the remaining Pattison Cup League fixtures—

To-morrow (Saturday) — Helmsdale United v. Golspie Sutherland, Lairg Rovers v. Dornoch, Bonar-Bridge v. Brora Rangers.

November 5—Brora v. Lairg, Golspie v. Dornoch, Helmsdale v. Bonar-Bridge.

November 12 — Bonar-Bridge v. Dornoch, Lairg v. Helmsdale, Brora v. Golspie.

November 19—Golspie v. Helmsdale, Dornoch v. Brora, Lairg v. Bonar-Bridge.

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OUR READERS' VIEWS ON TWO SCHOOL ROLL OF FROM

"BURNING" TOPICS

ROGART STATION

Caithness.

SIR—What on earth has come over Charles Murray since he left Muie? His latest essay into print on the railway issue, at a time when a concerted effort is being made to have Rogart station reopened, is, to say the least, in very bad taste and an act of disloyalty to his native parish. If there had been no Rogart there might well have been no Charles Murray, and what a loss that would have been to English literature and to modern journalism in particular!

We know that Rogart has no doctor, no joiner, no tailor (it does have at least one weaver, Charles), and that it is minus a lot of other things, including an adequate bus service. But is that any reason why it should be denied the use of its railway station? Railways are not yet in the category of scythes—although even those implements come in handy at times, even yet.

The force of the whole thing, of course, is that the station is still there (and will probably remain there) with some, not all, of its staff, and that the train often slows down almost to stopping point as it passes through silently, stealthily, almost surreptitiously (can a train blush?), carrying the Rogart passengers to Lairg or Golspie.

The last time I passed there I could have taken a chance and stepped off, but being an honest sort of chap I went on to Lairg and paid £1 for a hire back to Pittenloch.

It is simply delightful to have found in Charles Murray a man who would gladly accept that sort of thing in the cause of economy and acceleration. Economy? One wonders just how much is being saved by the closing of stations—I would be prepared to say that it is very little, and even the modicum which may be saved will almost certainly be frittered away in other directions.

But is it just a question of economy? Surely one must consider the question of service to the public. Take, for example, another Government Department, the Post Office. They have erected (and are continuing to erect), at considerable cost, telephone booths in numerous isolated situations, often in districts with very few householders, where they cannot hope to reap a large revenue. Yet there is no word of withdrawing the facilities for that reason. The analogy may not be a first-class one, but it at least shows that humanity is sometimes considered.

Did I say acceleration? Yes, a whole half-hour on the run from Inverness to Wick—of course, the poor train, missing its normal stops, has often to halt for longish breathers at such stations as Brora and Forsinard.

Charles Murray, in his profound wisdom, would seem to write off Rogart as a sort of doomed oasis. But let me remind him of this—there were intrepid fighting men and women in Rogart long before he was born—men who dug the crofts out of the hillside with their own hands and who stood up to "officials" in the shape of factors, evictors and other rought-riders. They won their battles, more than they lost.

The blood is still there, and, at the present time, their grandchildren are fighting a new form of officialdom. I believe (led by their splendid councillor) that they will win through.

There has been a lot of talk about symbols, but Rogart itself is a symbol, so let us rally to her standard. And, one last word, Charles—if you cannot do anything to help the place that holds the ashes of your forebears, for goodness sake don't try to hurt her.

Yours, etc.—D. C. SUTHERLAND.

SIR—I very much doubt the wisdom of the line he is taking, when A.M. specifies stations which he considers should have a higher priority—placing for closure than Rogart.

British Railways, he should know by now, will simply regard a charge of inconsistency in this matter as an invitation to make further closures; and in their fight for the restoration of their travelling facilities, the people of Rogart, I'm sure, have no wish to harden those of other communities like Altnabreac, or Reay, or—yes, even—Gorton.

Another thing. Is not A.M. rather ungracious in contemptuously dismissing as mere literary exercises the letters from Rogart-lovers in various parts of the country? If the effect, as it is clearly the intention, of these letters is to encourage the people of Rogart in their fight, why should he call them "useless"?—Yours, etc., MAC.

GORTON NOT A STATION!

Gorton, Bridge of Orchy, Argyll. **SIR**—It might interest your correspondent, "A.M.", to know that Gorton is classified as an "Operating Block Post" and actually never did pretend to the dignity of commercial status, although it would be fair to add that, despite being so classified,

men, tourists, etc., than did Rogart prior to its having been demoted.

It is amusing, too, to read about all those thousands of passengers supposed to have been handled at Rogart station. Amusing, that is, in the light of that Highland Omnibuses Ltd. had submitted as one of their main arguments in support of their recent application to raise fares, that closures of these Northern stations had sharply raised their running costs on account of their now running a greatly increased mileage for the carriage of very few passengers. Yours, etc.—CHARLES MURRAY.

CROFTERS' UNION

SIR—In dealing with the Crofters' Union your editorial of October 21 speculates on the question as to whether the crofters' grievances are of local origin.

On another page the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland goes on record as saying that his Crofters' Union is widely different areas would appear to indicate that the grievances are not local and, in fact, that they are varied and many.

The Under-Secretary's observation, which, of course, reflects little credit on the Crofters' Commission, is quite an accurate picture of the existing state of affairs in the Highlands.

Sandy, of "The Farming News," takes a swipe at the Crofters' Union and indeed gets quite poetical about the "pangs of birth" and "like snow falling off the dyke," but his rhetoric cannot disguise the fact that the N.F.U. has not and will not represent the interests of the crofter. I know, on factual evidence, that the farmers of Sutherland have nothing but contempt for the crofters and I specifically refer to those on the executive of the Sutherland and N.F.U.

Lairg sales are well worth some study. There, the purpose of the crofters seems to be to bolster up the catalogue to allow the farmer to dispose of his stock at the most favourable hour, while in lamp-light the crofter is left to get what price he can from the few buyers who are left seeking bargains at the crofters' expense.

Nowhere else in all Britain would such a state of affairs be allowed to exist, so here, "Sandy," is a wonderful opportunity for the N.F.U. to prove how genuine is their desire to protect the interests of the crofter.

The day I see a farmer bringing up the rear end of a catalogue at Lairg sale that day I will join the N.F.U. Every kind of commission and panel have had a go at sorting out the Highland problem and all have lamentably failed. It is not without significance that on all those commissions the crofter has been conspicuously absent. It is therefore the duty of all crofters to join the Crofters' Union so that, before it is too late, they can have a body to represent them, a body who knows and sympathises with their conditions and aspirations. Yours, etc.—J.M.

Gills, Canlsbay, Caithness. **SIR**—You still seem sceptical about the crofters' case against the Crofters' Commission. It is not a matter of losing faith in the Commission—some of us never had any.

While one could not agree more about the virtue of having one big union for all agriculture (farmers and crofters) "Gloomy Memories" still haunt the crofter's mind, and he fears it might be but a cat and mouse union or like the lady who went for a ride on the tiger's back.

The pity is that in an age when we spit the atom, we let bitter legacies and obsolete interests split us. It may be noted that all the best results have come from reforms preceded by agitation, legislation and good administration. In the first Crofters Act and the 1911 Act, all three stages were abundantly evident. In this last (1955) Act all were conspicuous by their absence. Why? "Beware of the Greeks when they bring gifts." Just as Dr Clark, the

mas and Easter. Their replies took my breath away—a week and two days with two week-ends; some will be leaving home just after the New Year. Take off the long journey home and back under difficult conditions—and some the ones away from home, lose almost a day—and still they have the biggest part of the winter to face on their return.

Hostel Youngsters Will Applaud Here

A schoolmaster explained this mad-

champion of the first Act, lost his seat in 1900 due to opposition to foreign policy of the Boer War, the sudden and dramatic smash of the Empire has left our rulers with a surplus of foreign administrators, so the unwanted chickens are coming home to roost.

The Commission of enquiry who preceded the Crofters Commission, left no hope, and the Scottish Secretary, Mr McNeill, who appointed them, was nearly booted off the platform at Inverness, so that the formal vote of thanks at the end was a visible farce.

When discussing our crofting problems with M.P.s in Parliament last year, I was amazed at their want of knowledge of the crofting class position and social anomalies. They thought the crofters were insured like "employed contributors" and did not know we were on the same status as the biggest farmer—"self-employed." It means, too, that we have no "65 pension."

With hopes to return to support the cause that lacks assistance, Secretary Munro and Commissioner Mackenzie especially.—Yours, etc., A. Matheson.

GARDENS SCHEME

Rovie Lodge, Rogart.

SIR—Each year I have put the sum of many accounts in "The Northern Times" for the public to see. This year I thought it might interest people to see what the opening of gardens has raised in Sutherland from 1950 to 1960 for the Queen's nurses and other charities.

The figures are as follows:—1950—£347 6/2; 1951—£206 7/1; 1952—£275 7/11; 1953—£280 12/7; 1954—£363 4/10; 1955—£265 16/2; 1956—£352 18/9; 1957—£207 4/-; 1958—£344 19/1; 1959—£315 12/4; 1960—£176; making a total of £3135 8/11 for the 11 years.

I am sorry to say that this year we have had to show the lowest return.

I know that the weather was not in our favour, and that it rained on about every day there was a garden open.

I hope that next year people in Sutherland will do their best to come to the gardens and to give, and so help to make up for the drop in income this year. We should not leave it to the tourists to provide most of the support. I would like once more to thank the garden owners, the gardeners and any other helpers who gave so much of their time and energy for this scheme.—Yours, etc., Joyce Rawstorne (County Organiser).

POPPY DAY

(From the Duke of Buccleuch) 23 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, 3.

SIR—The collection on Poppy Day (November 12) for the Earl Haig Fund (Scotland) affords an opportunity for showing in a practical way that the sacrifices made by those who gave us victory in two world wars are not forgotten.

The fund makes no distinction of rank, and ex-members (and their dependants) of the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Air Force, the Women's Services and the nursing services are eligible for help in time of need.

The British Legion Scotland receives a grant from the Earl Haig Fund (Scotland) annually sufficient to cover the cost of its pensions and resettlement departments which do valuable work for ex-Service men and their widows.

I thank all those who have contributed by gifts or service in the past and am confident that the response to this reminder of the debt that is owed will be met once again in a generous spirit. Cheques and postal orders (crossed) will be gratefully acknowledged. These should be made payable to the Earl Haig Fund (Scotland) and sent to me at 23 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, 3. Yours, etc.—BUCCLEUCH (President).

BRITISH SAILORS' SOCIETY

SIR—May I, through the courtesy of your columns, thank those of your readers who have sent in donations to the British Sailors' Society in response to the B.B.C. Television Appeal by Mr Rikki Fulton on October 16.

No doubt there are many others who are still thinking of contributing and in case they have mislaid the address to which the money should be sent, it is—Rikki Fulton, British Sailors' Society, 266 Clyde Street, Glasgow, C.1.

All gifts, both large and small, will be gratefully received. Yours, etc.—IVAR COLQUHOUN, of Luss (chairman, Scottish Committee).

SCHOOL ROLL OF FROM 2388

County Break-up

AT County 5 last there were 2388 school pupils in Sutherland, and of that number 1547 were primary, 655 in junior secondary or in first, second or third year higher grade, and 170 in senior secondary years 4 to 6.

The details were submitted to Sutherland Education Committee at Lairg recently, and the table showed that Dornoch Academy had 57 more pupils than Golspie Senior Secondary School. Golspie, at 178, had nine more primary pupils than Dornoch, but the Academy held sway in the senior secondary years—181 in the first three years against Golspie's 124 and 76 in the fourth, fifth and sixth years against Golspie's 67.

Another interesting feature was that Farr Junior Secondary School, Bettyhill, had 20 more pupils than either Bonar-Bridge or Lairg schools in the first three secondary years—51 against, respectively, 30 and 31. But Lairg have a primary school of 119 against Bonar's 69 and Farr's 56.

At the Sutherland Technical School, where there is no primary department, there are 52 pupils in the first three years and 27 in the fourth year.

CLYNE AND HELMSDALE

Clyne Junior Secondary School has 194 primary pupils and 94 junior secondary and Helmsdale has 128 primary and 77 junior secondary, respective grand totals of 288 and 205. The only other junior secondary pupils in the county are at Lochinver (10) and Melness (5).

Other primary school rolls are—Stoer (9), Drumbeg (7), Elphin (8), Lochinver (49), Assynt (6), Unapool (9), Scourie (13), Badcall Inchard (40), Oldshore (20), Durine (42), Achfary (14), Fanagmore (10), Tongue (39), Melness (30), Skerryay (13), Armadale (6), Strathly (27), Melvich (31), Strathnaver (11), Halladale (23), Altnaharra (10), Kildonan (9), Kinbrace (10), Loth (15), Strathbrora (7), Rogart (25), Blarich (19), Rhilochan (9), Embo (46), Skibo (9), Rosehall (30), Larachan (18), and Invershin (20).

HONOUR WHERE HONOUR

Recently, in our badminton report, we referred to the good work done in the past year by the president of the Sutherland Association, Mr A. Davidson. But, of course, as all badminton players in the county know, that tribute should have gone to Mr J. R. Fraser, Golspie, the retiring president. Mr Davidson was appointed the new president, and no doubt he will follow in Mr Fraser's footsteps.

50 YEARS

BECAUSE of their fu the executive comm land Nursing Associatio without a superintendent reported in our issue o 1910. The association's stated, amounted to ove Andrew Sutherland, v 47, won the caddies' golf Golspie.

The county suffered of wind and rain. He the east coast. At Golsp up the lanes to the ma gable of a house in cou tion was blown down.

Mr Robert Mackintosh, appointed science assista Academy, Dundee.

Dr James MacLachlan Provost of Dornoch. A election he was returned The other successful ca John Murray (100), Sutherland (96).

At Dingwall auction m Gilmour, of Rosehall, s £10 each. Cross cattl Grant, Dornoch, made £10 10/-.

25 YEARS

DORNOCH Town Cou number of big gam Captain D. T. Mackay. Highlanders, we report of November 14, 1935.

Trafalgar and Balac commemorated in vario county. The children w to treats by the Str Circle.

After an operation fr

Time for

THE EASY Cl The easy chair was a gi The handsomest chair I He wrestled the old ch ment.

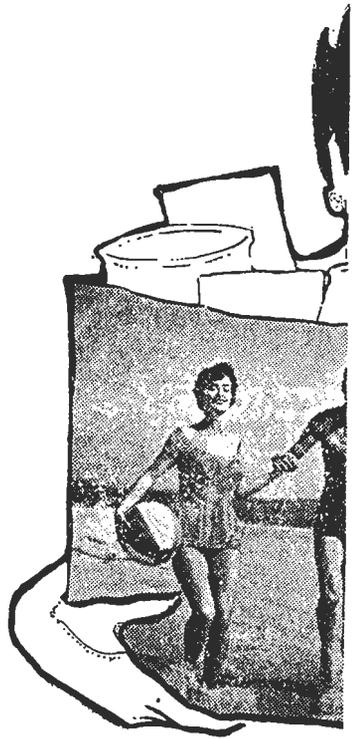
And thanked his broo replacement.

Nor could Grand Broo A chair that was put to For that is where moth And that's where the k work sit.

There, sharing space skates. The swain of the tee waits.

It's the favourite nest feline. And every guest mak beeline.

To park in the easy c Is father now? In his i



come to you

TAKING PRECAUTIONS
 FARMERS in the North must have heaved a sigh of relief when it is learned that there was no truth in the rumour that the foot-and-mouth disease epidemic had struck the Dingell area. The local market was closed yesterday, but last night it was given all clear.

But, perhaps, it would be wise for those concerned to take all possible precautions, "just in case." The difficulties are tremendous, of course, but on the consequences can be so serious—compensation for loss of stock is no satisfaction for the farmer—it would be best to follow a policy of "feeling first."

The reason for the British Government policy that all infected animals should be slaughtered is not because it is a "killer" disease, but if it was allowed to develop it would soon weaken the country's livestock and so have a consequent deleterious effect on food production.

Meanwhile, those who are inclined to think that the farming community are a superior class should note that such backs are liable to occur at any time.

BIG CAR RALLY NEXT WEEK

Sutherland Included in 2000 Mile Route

SCOTLAND this year will be making a direct interest in the annual Automobile Club's ninth international rally which is set for Blackpool next Monday and will include 13 Scottish crews in 180 entrants.

Each of the 2064-mile event will take over roads in Scotland, and Sutherland has been included, one of the starting points being at the Sutherland Arms Hotel, Golspie.

Mr. W. R. Sutherland, Rostellian, the well-known rally driver, will be in charge of the organisation so as this county is concerned. Already well known such as Miss Pat Moss (sister of the late Moss), German, French and Irish drivers have been motoring in Sutherland to get to know the route.

It is expected that the rally will be held from Tuesday to Thursday with the week will be Inverness.

The route will be by far the biggest rally to take in Sutherland in its route (see a motoring correspondent), with a cream of European drivers coming, and altogether the cars will take 48 hours to pass through each point on the way.

The next car to reach Golspie next week (November 23) is due at 11. It will arrive from Bonar-Bridge via the Loch Buis road to the Mound. The route will be to Rhiochan via Robin Glen, Little Rogart to Rovie, G. Rosehall, Sklag Bridge (Inchnaph), Nedd, Drumberg, Stoer, Invergaig (Lochinvar) and into Ross-shire. The first car is due at Sklag at 3.45 p.m., and at Inverkirker at 4.45 p.m. There will be six check ins.

A big feature is that this event will include the ladies' championship and the "er of the Rally" Cup.

WARNING

An important point for private motorists out to speculate on Wednesday, Sutherland emphasised to a reporter that in fairness to the rally motorists should not "clutter the roadways by parking indistinctly, and there should certainly be no parking within half a mile of Bridge and Inverkirkaig Bridge.

AUCTION SALE

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, ETC. removed from Foundry Bank and (available for convenience of Sale) will be sold within the HALL, BONARBRIDGE TO-MORROW AT 10.15 NOVEMBER

Includes Chesterfield Suite in leather, Bed-Settee Suite, 2 Wing Chairs in Moquette, 8 Fire-side and Chairs, Hand Chairs, 2 Modern 6-room Suites, Draw-leaf Tables, and Mahogany Sideboards, Dining S. Occasional Tables, Tea Trolley, Case, Display Cabinet, Hallstand, lin Piano in Walnut Case, 10 Bed-room Suites in Oak, Walnut Mahogany, Odd Wardrobes, Dining Tables and Chests, Single and 5 Beds, 2 Single Divans (complete), 5 Axminster and other Carpets, Carpeting, Rugs and Mats.

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MUIR OF ORD

FRIDAY, 25th NOVEMBER

REPAIRING MACHINERY

Factors, including 1956 Ferguson

FOR THEIR RIGHTS

Rail Passenger Service Must Be Restored, They Say: Case To Be Prepared

MASS MEETING MAY BE HELD

THE people of Rogart are so "furious" about the closing of the passenger service at their railway station that they have set up a fact-finding committee, who will report back to a public meeting.

And, if need be, a mass meeting will be held to which Sir David Robertson, M.P., and other influential persons will be invited.

It was claimed at a meeting in Pittentrail Hall, on Wednesday night of last week, that in the name of economy the interests and convenience of the travelling public had been utterly disregarded by the British Transport Commission.

CONFLICT

Mr G. M. Murray, Morvich, the local county councillor, who was chairman, pointed out that the Government's policy for the development of the tourist industry—Rogart is part of the development area—conflicted with the British Transport Commission's decision to close down their passenger service.

The outlook at the moment was "rather gloomy." Producing a sheaf of correspondence on the question, Mr Murray said, "I am afraid we are not making much headway. Our efforts so far have been in vain."

Mr Murray said he had received many letters of complaint about the inconveniences caused by the closure of the station, and the "unreasonable" bus service with which they were at present provided. They had been told that with the closure of the station they would get a reasonable bus service, but what happened? Often the bus left Laigr before the arrival of the "mail train, and in many cases passengers for Rogart had to hire a car to their destination. That was altogether wrong, and they should try to "hammer" this home to the appropriate authority.

Here Mr Murray produced a letter which the district council had received from the Scottish Transport Users' Consultative Committee, in which it was stated that the council's complaint about the bus service should have been sent to Scottish Omnibuses, Ltd. "That is the kind of reply we get," said Mr Murray, "and the kind of reply one might expect from a body who appear to support the British Transport Commission's decision." One of the members of the consultative committee, he added, was also a member of the Scottish Tourist Board. But the consultative committee were "stifling" what the Tourist Board had done.

INCONVENIENCE

When the meeting was opened for general discussion, the Rev. J. R. Aitken, Free Church Manse, instanced the inconvenience he had suffered on the occasions he had to travel to and from Edinburgh on church matters. "I very much appreciate the chairman's efforts," he said, "to know how much time and energy he has put into this question, and we hope his efforts will be fruitful."

Mr Aitken went on to suggest that the British Transport Commission might well allow trains to stop at Rogart for a few minutes. They could not lose by that. But he wondered what reaction there would be from Caithness. "I do not think they would grudge a three-minute stop at Rogart."

He could claim to be one of the principal users of the passenger service so far as long distances were concerned. In one year he travelled about 10 times to Edinburgh. He had to use his car to and from Laigr, but in winter he might get stranded because of the condition of the roads.

Mr J. Turner, West Pittentrail, thought they should protest as strongly as possible. He said that last summer they had a balance of £75 from their gala week, which had been arranged for visitors. "We have one body trying to encourage tourism, and another body putting an impediment in our way."

MIGHT BE STRANDED

Mr Mackay Mackay, Rogart, instanced the case of a girl who had to abandon her work in Golspie because of the closure of the station and the poor bus service. In his own case—he had to travel by car to Brora—he might be stranded in Brora over the weekend, if they had bad weather.

Mr Mackay thought that Rogart had blundered at the start by allowing their case to be debated with that of Dornoch and Loth. "There was an onus on us to have seen that Rogart was dealt with separately."

Here he said he was of the opinion that many people—he was referring to the consultative committee—had been appointed to executive posts who knew very little or nothing about the conditions prevailing in the Highlands. Who knew less about the needs of the Highlands than one of the members of the British Transport Commission?

It was a disgrace that the Rogart station had been closed. "A railway station is a necessity, and if our

whole hog, even if it means passive resistance." There was nothing civil servants hated more than publicity, and the people of Rogart should give their case the fullest publicity, even if it meant calling a mass meeting.

"Let's make a big noise by calling in our M.P. and two of his colleagues who would be willing to come. I know. We should also get the national newspapers interested and make as big a 'stink' as possible."

"LET DOWN"

Mr J. N. Schofield, Corryllyn, Rogart, thought the Transport Consultative Users' Committee had let them down badly. When anybody made complaints their reply was always the same, "I have discussed the matter with the chairman, who feels that this is not the body to whom you should have written at this stage."

One member of the Transport Commission should be ashamed of what was done. "If he had his heart in the Highlands as well as his land it would be better for us."

Mr Schofield said the bus service was running at a loss before the Rogart station was closed to passengers, but no one knew what their losses would be now. He suggested that they should have a mass meeting on an all-party platform.

Chairman — It seems terrible that after travelling all night from the south you find that your bus from Laigr has left for Golspie.

Here he referred to Highland Omnibuses, Ltd., who were doing their best in very difficult conditions. "We cannot blame them, as they are always willing to help us as much as they can."

Mr D. Sutherland, Morness, thought

Because of lack of space, several letters to the Editor have had to be held over until next week.

that if the station had been closed for goods as well as for passengers, it would not have looked so silly. They had great hardship with the bus service. On one occasion a visitor from England came off the train at Laigr, but he had to rejoin it because the Laigr bus had left for Golspie. She had to proceed to Golspie, and had to be taken back to Rogart by car.

HOSPITAL PATIENTS

The Rev. J. B. Imrie, Piffure Manse, was firmly convinced that they should base their appeal for the reopening of the station on humanitarian grounds. The crucial time was when patients were going into hospitals in the south, and when they returned home. Were the railways more important than people, he asked. Had they gone into the legal aspect of the closure? They should find out if the British Transport Commissioners were not breaking an agreement and taking away their inalienable rights.

"We can fight this on our own. We have a grand representation to-night, from which we could form a committee to go into facts and ask to be heard by the British Transport Commission. With the aid of the press, let us fight!"

Mr Aitken—If a fight can achieve our objective, fight we must.

Chairman—I am quite convinced that two of a staff would give us the passenger service we so badly need.

Two local merchants complained about the delay in delivering perishable goods—such as bread—which came by passenger train. In one case it took 24 hours to deliver bread from a passenger station 10 miles away.

Chairman—We have given this problem a very good "airing," and I hope this will be a step forward to success.

Ultimately the following committee were appointed:—Mr G. M. Murray (chairman), Mr Mackay Mackay, Mr J. Schofield, Mr D. Sutherland, the Rev. J. R. Aitken, and Mr W. Mackenzie (Reidchalme).

T.A. Licence Query

IT was all wrong if a Territorial Association had the right to run a licensed bar in a drill hall without coming under the jurisdiction of a licensing court, Mr T. M. Hunter, Brora, last Wednesday told Sutherland Appeal Court.

Inspector J. A. Thom, representing the Chief Constable, said this was an Army Cantonment licence, and the law would have to be amended before action could be taken.

The chairman, Mr Thomas Adam, Golspie, agreed that the matter should be investigated, but that was not for the Appeal Court. The clerk (Mr D. Macdonald) could make inquiries and remit the question to the Licensing Court if that was necessary. The suggestion was approved.

The Appeal Court confirmed a new certificate previously granted by the Licensing Court to Mrs Catherine Cunningham in respect of the Trentham Hotel,

NOT GUILTY OF ASSAULT

"Fooling About" With Butcher's Knife

AFTER trial at Dornoch Sheriff Court last Tuesday, Donald Grant (18), apprentice butcher, 7 Brannen Terrace, Dornoch, was found not guilty of assaulting James Ross Melville (17), railway porter, 4 Gilchrist Square, Dornoch, by stabbing him in the face with a butcher's knife on August 30 last. The incident was alleged to have taken place in the back-shop of butchers' premises at Castle Street, Dornoch.

Mr B. S. Simpson, consultant surgeon at the Lawson Memorial Hospital, Golspie, said that when Melville was admitted to hospital he had a wound above the right jaw, and was suffering from shock. The wound penetrated through the right cheek to the mouth. Had it been a deliberate stab it would have penetrated much farther with such a sharp instrument.

Questioned by Mr John H. McCuskie, advocate, Edinburgh, who suggested that a deliberate stab would have been aimed at some other part of the person, Mr Simpson agreed that the wound was not consistent with a deliberate stab. Mr Simpson said that Melville had told him that he and Grant were "fooling about" with a butcher's boning knife.

BONING MEAT

Melville said that when he went into the back-shop accused and another man (Robert Mackay) were boning meat. As a joke a remark was made about Grant's haircut. They laughed, but Grant seemed to lose his temper and made a dive at witness with the knife. Witness, not feeling sure of himself on the side of his face, pushed Grant back and said, "Take it easy, man." Because the local doctor was not available he had to go to the chemist's shop for emergency treatment.

Questioned by Mr McCuskie, witness said he thought the stab was deliberate at the time, but when he left the butcher's premises he made no complaint to a constable who was in Castle Street. Neither did he tell his father until later. If accused had apologized, witness said, he would have regarded the incident as an accident.

Witness added that because he had been looking at some accounts which he had to deliver, he saw only a slight movement on accused's part—then he felt the knife going through his cheek.

Witness denied that when Grant tried to trip him he swung his head away and struck the knife which was in Grant's left hand.

Asked why he had told the doctor they were "fooling about" and why he did not complain to the constable about the incident, witness did not reply. Asked why he had changed his mind and made a report to the police, witness said the doctor suggested that the matter ought to be reported to the police. He had no ill-will or animosity against accused as he had been friends since childhood.

Mr Simpson, who was later recalled in the case, denied that he had suggested the police should be brought in. Robert Mackay said that it was he who had made the remark about accused's haircut when Melville came into the back-shop. He did not pay much attention to what accused and Melville were saying or doing. The first he knew of any injury was when he saw Melville with his hand to his face. In witness's opinion nothing happened which could have been regarded as an assault.

JOKE ABOUT HAIRCUT

Accused's explanation was that when the joke had been made about his haircut, he turned round to Melville and said, "How would you like your hair cut?" Witness made a grip Melville's hair and the boning knife in his left hand must have accidentally penetrated his cheek. "I got a fright and walked away," said accused. He denied that he deliberately struck Melville with the knife.

Cross-examined, accused said that the knife must have come in contact with Melville's cheek when he pulled his head away. He denied that he had lost control of himself.

The fiscal (Mr G. A. Mackenzie) said this was a case surrounded with considerable difficulty. He was not disputing anything further than a momentary action by the accused. It was incomprehensible how he could have lost his temper, as Melville had been accused's friend since their school days.

TRIBUTE TO

Remembrance Day Ser

REMEMBRANCE DAY services in Sutherland last Sunday were held in fine weather, with the winter sun shining warmly, as the uniformed services and the public gathered round the village memorials to pay tribute to the fallen in two world wars.

There was a very good turn-out of British Legion members and ex-Servicemen at Dornoch. The parade, from the Square to the War Memorial, was headed by a full colour party of the British Legion.

The service at the Memorial was conducted by the Rev. F. H. Fulton, minister of Dornoch Cathedral.

Also on parade were members of Dornoch Town Council and representatives of the Bench and Bar, and for the first time the local platoon of the Army Cadet Force were present under the command of Lieut. A. Macdonald.

At the end of the service the lament was played by Pipe-Major Kenneth Macrae and Piper James Duff. Wreaths were laid at the base of the Memorial by Captain C. M. Hardy (for the British Legion), by Miss J. I. C. Chisholm (for the Town Council) and by Cadet James Melville for the A.C.F.

Later, for the parade to the Free Church, the Legion and A.C.F. were joined by Girl Guides, Cubs and Brownies. The service was conducted by the Rev. J. R. Aitken, Rogart.

At Bonar-Bridge the service was conducted by the Rev. A. W. Mackinnon, Creich Church of Scotland, and on parade were the British Legion (under Major W. Heath) and contingents from the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and

DUKE OF SUTHERLAND

THE Duke and Duchess of Sutherland will not be at Dornoch next summer if the castle is let, but they hope to spend a holiday at Tongue House, as the Duke indicated when he spoke at Tongue Hall earlier this year.

Brownies. All then paraded to the church, where a special service was conducted by Mr Mackinnon, while Mr W. Bain read the lesson.

At Brora the service was conducted by the Rev. John B. Clarke, Clyne Church of Scotland, and also present was Father John Cunningham. The local company of the 11th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders were on parade, their commander, Major Duncan Macdonald, and also present was Lieut. Michael Scott.

Praise was led by Mr H. A. Ross and the choir of Clyne Parish Church.

There were wreaths from the Territorials, Brora branch of the British Legion and Sutherland Wool Mills. There was a large attendance.

The British Legion parade of ex-Servicemen at Golspie was under the command of Mr John Melville, and the service was conducted by the Rev. Robert C. Alston. Mr R. M. Baddon, British Legion president, and Mr J. R. Fraser, a member of committee, laid a wreath at the memorial. The lament was played by Piper L. Leitch.

The service at Lochinvar War Memorial was conducted by the Rev. Angus Mackenzie, Church of Scotland, and the praise was led by Mr A. M. Ross. The Legion wreath was laid at the base of the Memorial by Mrs A. M. Ross.

In the evening there was a parade of Girl Guides, Brownies and Cubs to the church, where there was a service of remembrance conducted by Mr Mackenzie. The retiring collection was for the Earl Haig Fund.

At Laigr there was a much larger gathering of the general public than in previous years at the War Memorial, when the short service, culminating with the Two Minutes Silence, was conducted by the Rev. Finlay Macleod, Church of Scotland.

The parade, which gathered in the school playground, had the smallest number of British Legion members and ex-Servicemen ever seen at a similar parade in Laigr.

This was, however, to some extent, counteracted by the junior organisations who turned out, in almost full strength, The Girl Guides, under Miss A. Gray (Divisional Commissioner), Miss Leed (captain) and Miss I. Ross (Lieutenant) The Brownies

OVER 450 ENTRIES AT COUNTY CAGEBIRD SHOW

THERE were over 450 entries for the Sutherland cagebird show at Golspie recently, and this event must now be one of the best for numbers and quality in the county.

Against strong opposition, which included competitors from as far south as Fife, local fanciers did very well indeed, and once again Mr J. A. Stevens, Doll, emphasised his claim to remain the budgetary world by exhibiting the best bird in the show. He won three trophies in this section. Mr W. Macleod, Golspie, the society chairman, also distinguished himself in the novice class.

In the canary classes Mr A. Mac-

Most Points for Glosters. R. Mackintosh Cup—A. Macdonald. Fife Fancy, Sutherland Society Shield—W. Lumsden, Kirkcaldy. Lizard, N. Mackay Cup—G. Slorach, Brora.

Best young canary (local), H. Macdonald Shield—A. Macdonald.

BUDGERIGARS

Best in Show, A. Stevens Memorial Rose Bowl—A. Stevens, Brora.

Best any age, Society Cup—J. A. Stevens.

Breeders' Classes Mrs Macdonald Cup—J. Campbell, Thurso.

Novice—Society Cup—W. McLeod, Golspie.

Breeding Bird

change-over from free range intensive housing of breeding birds on deep litter has, luckily, coincided with greatly increased knowledge of the feed requirements of the breeding bird.

Stock owners, to-day, are not satisfied unless hatchability reaches at least 80% of the eggs.

Such figures, it is now considered, cannot be achieved unless the breeders ration contains adequate amounts of no more than 13 vitamins and 5 minerals.

Superb Breeding Rations contain the full complement of essential minerals and vitamins in addition, of course, to a proper balance of proteins and carbohydrates.



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NEW BRIDGE AT BALNACOLL

Actual Site Not Yet Settled

THEY had not committed themselves in any way as to where the proposed bridge for vehicular traffic was to be built at Balnacoll, on the Gordonbush road, between the parishes of Rogart and Clyne, the County Council were assured at Lairg last week.

At Balnacoll there is a ford for traffic and a suspension bridge for pedestrians but when the river Brora is high motorists cannot get across, and in summer this is especially annoying for tourists.

At the council's October meeting plans and designs for two bridges were submitted by a firm of consulting engineers. One, which was sited in the minutes to be immediately above the existing footbridge, was estimated to cost £17,600 and the second, farther upstream, to cost £18,800.

CHALLENGED
 Mr J. P. Whittet, Clashmore, challenged the October minutes which said that the council had approved the scheme for a crossing "immediately above" the footbridge. There was no such resolution or agreement, said Mr Whittet.

Major J. H. Weir, Golspie, commented that he had been assured that nothing would be done until Mr. Tysen (Gordonbush) was consulted. "I am not" the county clerk's office the day afterwards (after an inspection on the site) and the clerk was away. I spoke to Mr. Rodger (the assistant) and he said it was not definitely agreed where the bridge would be and that the Department were being asked about whether a grant would be forthcoming."

Mr A. M. Ross, Brora—Both estates are involved (the Sutherland Estate is the other one).
 The Rev. William MacLeod, convener, said there were two schemes — one above and one below. "My understanding is we agreed to the lower scheme. I do not know what the other members think."

Mr G. M. Morrison, Bonar-Bridge—I understood we agreed to the lower one.

Mr G. Fraser, Dalchiel—I really don't think it.

Major R. Donaldson, Eddrachilles—We did say that of the two it would be the lower one.
 Mr Whittet—We did not agree that the bridge to be built would be above the existing footbridge.
 Mr Rodger said that his recollection was that of the two schemes the council's preference was for the lower one.

TWO STEPS TO BE TAKEN
 Mr Whittet — That is quite agreed, but there was no definite decision about location.

Mr Rodger—I am prepared to accept Mr Whittet's suggestion that there was no actual site for the bridge. We had to discover if there was to be any grant and we had to negotiate with the proprietors.

Convener—There is nothing in this minute contradicting that view.

The minute stated, "The council, after discussion, agreed to approve the scheme produced by the engineers for a crossing immediately above the footbridge, at an estimated cost of £17,600, and instructed the county clerk to submit the scheme to the appropriate Department for approval."

Mr Whittet — The council have approved here a scheme "immediately above" the footbridge and to submit it for approval to the Department.

Convener—We had two plans and we agreed to the second plan, at £17,600. It does not matter where it was.

Mr Morrison—Definitely.
 Convener—You object to the words "immediately above"?

FEAR
 Mr Whittet—I don't even want them out. But the first step was to consult the proprietors. If they do not agree you will be in the position of having approved this thing and not be able to carry on with it unless you have a compulsory order.

Convener—Leave out the word "immediately". The plan was above the footbridge. We adopted the second plan.

Mr Whittet—Put "adjacent to" and that will leave you clear.

Convener—I have no objection. And there is no harm in asking the Department if they will agree to the plan.

It was agreed that the word "near" should be substituted for the words "immediately above".

Mr Rodger said that nothing had been done to commit themselves in any way. The Department only wanted the council's observations.

DEFENCE SCHEME
 Sgt. I. Macleod, the civil defence officer, told Sutherland County Council last week that he was formulating a scheme whereby, in the event of an emergency, members of the corps could be turned out efficiently. He would require the council's permission and

REOPEN ROGART STATION. READERS SAY

(To the Editor, "The Northern Times")
 Argyll.

SIR—I have been interested in the reactions subsequent to the closing of Rogart Station to passenger service. It is averred that this strange step was taken in the interests of economy. Of all that has been said or written I have not yet been able to find even a vestige of proof that such economy has, in fact, been effected.

The train runs through Rogart station from the North and from the South—and for a stop of a minute or two at Rogart station, to give what appears to be a very necessary service, should not in any way interfere with economy—rather should it help it, even if passengers are not always in number.

Had the train service terminated somewhere south of Rogart, then there might be some substance in the argument for economy.

It must be nauseating to passengers destined for Pitfour or Pittentail to find they are being rushed past their destination on to Golspie or Lairg, as the case may be.

According to the report of the meeting held recently in Rogart various concrete reasons were given for the restoration of a passenger service which was snatched from the grasp of the people—probably without any previous consultation as to whether such a step was justifiable.

It seems cold comfort came from the Consultative Committee. Probably the trouble is that there are far too many committees and kindred bodies in being to-day—some of which may well be responsible for situations that arise, and in which they are later called to arbitrate.

Strange, too, is the fact that the passenger service is withdrawn while a goods service is being maintained. This was rightly pointed out at the meeting. I don't think it would take an intellectual genius to devise a plan whereby a passenger and goods service might be incorporated in.

It is gratifying to learn that the inhabitants of Rogart are taking up the cudgels to do battle for what is plainly their rights. If this imposition is allowed to go unchallenged, it might well prove to be the spawn which, given the required incubation period, will produce the octopus which would do much to bring about another Highland Clearance.

I notice that a correspondent in your issue of November 25 last asks some questions which he seems to hold as relevant to the present controversy. As concerning the absence of a resident arm of the law in Rogart, if these duties are discharged from headquarters, surely it can be safely assumed that the citizens of Rogart are law-abiding, and that the present system is working satisfactorily. Otherwise, I should imagine that proper steps would be taken, similar to those taken over the passenger service.

The same should apply to the medical or other services, if not functioning to satisfaction. I think the recently appointed committee are well able to deal efficiently with the present problem, and I hope their worthy efforts will ultimately be rewarded by success.
 Yours, etc.—DONALD G. MACKENZIE.

Caithness, 28/11/60.

SIR—Charles Murray would use all arguments in favour of re-opening Rogart station as humanitarian or compassionate. That view is, of course, far from being the complete truth, but granting that it is partly correct, surely one must give due consideration to these attributes.

If humanity and compassion are to be set aside completely and trodden underfoot, and an organisation like British Railways can ride rough shod over every argument and plea put before them, surely that way lies dic-

tatorship, or Hitlerism, call it what one will.

Dictatorship certainly does not lie in the rebellious spirit which causes the Rogart people to fight for their just rights, although to Charles Murray it seems to appear as an ogre on the horizon, evidently because it dares to question the decision of his beloved British Railways.

No doubt, the same was said somewhere when somebody had the effrontery to question Crichton Down.

Mr Murray refers to the roads leading into Rogart. I admit I was not aware that these are such "death-tracks" as he says, nor that there had been at one time a scheme to widen them. I do know, however, that there was a fine scheme about 1938 to put a new road across the notorious Berriedale Brae in Caithness, but Berriedale Brae is still as it was (in spite of Dounreay and John O'Groats), except for some comparatively minor improvements this year. What stopped the major scheme? The war, of course, just as it, no doubt, stopped the Rogart scheme. But that was not the fault of the Caithness people no more than it was the fault of the Rogart people, and any "frustrating maladministration or gross neglect" cannot be laid at their doors. And surely, if the roads are such "death-tracks," that is all the more reason why the railway should remain open.

Now, Mr Murray, you say the railway station should remain closed. In other words, it doesn't matter much if Rogart dies off. But is that a fair attitude? Surely, Mr Murray, a man of your ability, with many ties binding you to Rogart, instead of being so fatalistically "destructive," should propound some alternative scheme of a constructive nature which would give Rogart a satisfactory answer to the problems which have been thrust upon her. You could yet be Rogart's saviour.
 —Yours, etc. D. C. SUTHERLAND.

Gorton, Bridge of Orchy, Argyll.

SIR—Your correspondent, "A.M.," misquoted me by insisting that in my previous letter I had stated that "as a railwayman" I regretted having had publicly to opine that the withdrawal of passenger facilities from Rogart station was fully justified. What I did write was that for me to "have opined otherwise, would be to belie the salient facts involved, as well as besmirch my loyalties as a railwayman of over 30 years' standing."

Without doubt, that I am fully conversant with these facts, plus having adjudged them so equitably is obviously one good reason why "A.M." so impudently insists that my place in this controversy is the neutral corner. As also does it indicate how crack-pot and untenable is the argument that must needs be sheltered from the merest breath of withering factual criticism.

But who, in any case, is this "A.M." who takes it upon himself (or herself) to direct as to who, or who should not, participate (with your own impartial and courteous permission, Mr Editor) in any controversial subject of public interest that may find its way into your columns?

And with which laughable query, let me on this occasion bid a most respectful Au Revoir—Yours, etc.
 CHARLES MURRAY.

Caithness N.F.U. and Crofting Problems

THE Crofting Problems Committee of the Caithness National Farmers' Union have agreed that revision of the Crofters Act, 1955, is necessary to include the owner-occupiers as crofters under the Crofters' Commission, but they are of opinion that, in general, the powers given in the 1955 Act to the Commission are sufficient.

The committee, who met in Thurso recently, expressed some anxiety at the

THEY MIGHT GET PIPED WATER

Cheap Labour Scheme
REMOTE areas where the residents cannot get a piped water supply because of the cost may be helped to acquire this amenity through the International Voluntary Service.

At the County Council meeting at Lairg last week there was submitted a letter from the service's secretary, who stated, "The only work we have so far undertaken in the Highlands (in conjunction with the Highlands Voluntary Development Association) was clearing and remaking choked stone drains in the pastureland of a crofting community."

"Other work which we have offered to undertake at various times, but which has, for one reason or another, not proved possible, includes road and footpath improvement and repairs to a pier."

SIR ROBERT'S PLAN

"On the occasion of a visit I paid to the offices of the Crofters' Commission, in Inverness, a year or two ago, Sir Robert Urquhart himself suggested that there would be many small settlements in the North-west without a piped water supply for which we might undertake the piping of the supply down the mountainside to a central point from which crofters or cottagers could themselves undertake individual extensions."

"I hope this gives you some idea of the kind of services we could render to the crofting counties. There may well be many another job which would be within our capabilities, always provided that the bulk of the work is of a non-technical nature and that whatever technical knowledge was required would be provided by yourself, since we just cannot guarantee to have skilled people available exactly at the right time."

Major R. Donaldson, Eddrachilles, thought it was a very sound proposal if they could find the means of utilising these people. They could prepare such as trenches for laying water pipes.

ASSURANCE

Mr D. R. Fasham, water engineer, said he thought Major Donaldson was on the right lines. These people might be used for those areas which otherwise would not get a water supply. "But if they were to be used on a scheme which the council knew was going ahead there would be complaints from local contractors and local people who might fear they would lose work." "The point is this would help schemes which would be impossible if we did not get this cheap labour. There would be no question of local people being deprived of work." He would take up the matter with the Crofters' Commission.

Dornoch Butchers Pay Top Price

AT Dingwall auction market last week J. Grant and Sons, the Dornoch butchers, bought fat steers at the top price of £9 1/- per cwt.

At the dispersal sale of the Balnagore (Pearn) dairy herd J. Grant and Sons, for their Cuthill farm, bought Ayrshire bulling heifers at £58. The overall average of cows and heifers was approximately £85.

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