



The Scottish Region has issued 15 platelayers working on the Pollokshields-Eglinton Street section of the Glasgow suburban electric line with a new kind of luminous safety jacket which shines in half-light conditions. These jackets are made from a fluorescent orange plastic material and are similar in appearance to old-fashioned ships' life-jackets.

special conference of affected local authorities and MPs to discuss the question.

## Relieve in the Far North

The Minister of Transport's refusal to sanction withdrawal of the Inverness-Wick and Thurso and Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh passenger services (he has reserved his judgment on the closure of individual stations on these routes) cannot have surprised anyone, this being an election year. Less expected was the prompt and brusque comment from Dr Beeching that the reprieve would cost substantially more than the £360,000 a year quoted by the Minister as the loss on these routes, and that the true figure in these and other cases where Mr. Marples had refused closure proposals would be shown separately in BRB accounts henceforward. Clearly the BRB is increasingly irritated at snail's-pace action on the Beeching Report passenger service proposals, of which little more than 10 per cent have so far been approved; moreover, it begins to look as though the political complexion of the Government which the electors return in October will have much less effect in accelerating closures than one imagined a year ago, and that this aspect of the Beeching Plan will never sustain the pace its authors intended or reach fulfilment, at any rate within the 1960s. In some contrast to the cold footnote from 222 Marylebone Road on Mr. Marples' Far North decision was a statement from Mr. W. G. Thorpe, the Scottish Region's General Manager, which, although stressing that irrefutable economic arguments for closure of the lines remained, put the best possible face on the situation. Urging the public and trading community to make regular and frequent use of the lines to justify the agitation against their elimination, Mr. Thorpe gave an assurance

that his Region would "spare no effort to make both the passenger and freight services as attractive as the future earning prospects will allow". Development plans, he said, were already in hand. Rebutting allegations that Scotland's railways had been deliberately run down, he pointed out that in the past nine years over £70m had been spent on their development. He looked for increasing co-operation from such major industries in the north as agriculture and whisky distilling.

## Dr. Beeching meets Scottish Council

A new move in deliberations on the future of Scottish railways is a meeting between Dr. Beeching and the Scottish Council (Development & Industry), which the latter requested and which was scheduled for May 20 as we went to press. Although the council has taken on the co-ordination of objections on economic grounds to Beeching closure proposals, the discussion with Dr. Beeching was expected to be in general terms and not on specific issues. The Council has lately submitted to the Government its first reports studying individual closure schemes in the economic context; it has raised no objection to abandonment of the Stirling-Alloa and Perth-Kinross lines, but has recommended against shutting down the Ayr-Stranraer, Dumfries-Stranraer, Aberdeen-Fraserburgh and Maud-Peterhead lines. On another Scottish closure proposal, the Scottish TUCC hearing objections to the withdrawal of stopping services between Perth, Blair Atholl and Struan was told recently by Mr. H. M. Herbert, the Region's Northern Divisional Manager, because of bus and private car competition the annual passenger count at Murthly, Dalguise, Ballinluig and Struan stations had fallen from 9,605 to 5,000 since 1960.

## Minister approves W. Riding cut

The Minister of Transport has consented to the withdrawal of passenger services between Leeds Central and Bradford Exchange via Pudsey and the closure to passengers of the Lowtown and Greenside stations at Pudsey. The NER has tabled the withdrawal for June 15. After the closure of the Sunderland-Durham passenger service on May 2, the Sunderland-Fawcett Street Junction section was scheduled for removal; it will probably be left in place until after the next Durham Miners' Gala day in July, however. At a Newcastle TUCC hearing in April on another NER closure case, that of the North Tyneside electric service between Newcastle and Tynemouth via Riverside, a BR spokesman claimed that doubling the service's fares would not offset the current annual loss of £21,000 on this 6-mile section. Objectors asserted that withdrawal of the trains would be a serious handicap at this juncture, when some of the industries and shipyards along the route were expanding and increasing their labour forces after a period of depression. Whatever the fate of this

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