DEATH
OF THE
HON. MEMBER
FOR
RAMSEY.

A GREAT NATIONAL LOSS.

One of Manxland's Most Useful Patriots and Politicians.

It is with profound grief that we have to record to-day the death of the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr William Taubman Crennell, J.P., aged 51, which occurred at his residence, Sunnyside, Ramsey, on Wednesday morning at 10.30. The sad news has created intense sorrow and distress amongst all classes of the Manx community, from the Point of Ayre to the Calf of Man, and it is no exaggeration to say that the public mind was staggered by the almost tragic intelligence. The sense of loss felt by the passing of one of the Island's most able and valued public men, is extremely keen in Ramsey and Douglas particularly, whilst in official legislative and commercial circles was the regret of the public expressed in unmeasured terms. In the country, too, where the late Member's self-sacrificing national work was gratefully recognised there was heard lamentation and mourning on all hands, because of the loss of one who has proved to be a legislator of striking capacity and a Manxman of sterling worth. The sudden nature of the deceased's gentleman's illness and death has added to the tragic character of the event. Mr. Crennell was ill less than six days, and throughout that anxious period the Island was deeply moved as to his condition. He attended the meetings of the Wesleyan Synod at Castletown, on Thursday week, and was then in excellent health and spirits, so far as could be judged, arriving home in the evening. About eleven at night, after a conversation on the telephone, he had a stroke, but was able to ascend the stairs to his bedroom, and throw himself upon the bed, where help was speedily forthcoming, and Dr. Roe called in. It was at once seen that the Hon. Member was in a serious condition, his right side was paralysed, and he had lost the use of his speech. On Saturday and Sunday, his condition was unchanged, and Dr Roe wisely called in Dr. Pantin for consultation, who confirmed the opinion and treatment already given, but it was even then evident that hope of recovery was very remote. On Tuesday there seemed to be a slight improvement, but this was not maintained. Mr Crennell's son who is at King William's College, was summoned home, also Miss Ada Crennell, of the Children's Home, London. On Wednesday morning, it was apparent that the end was approaching, and at 10.30 the Hon. Member passed peacefully away, in the presence of his devoted wife and children. During his illness he was at times conscious, and able to recognise the members of his family and friends. Miss Shimmin (Matron of Ramsey Cottage Hospital) devotedly assisted in nursing the distinguished patient, and all that was humanly possible was done to save the life of this Ramsey's most valued citizen. Mr Crennell leaves a widow, one son, and a daughter. He has three brothers—Mr E. A. Crennell (Newcastle) Mr J. T. Crennell (London), Rev. Fraser Crennell; and three sisters living, viz., Misses Ada, Nellie, and Katie Crennell, all employed in the work of the Children's Home and he has three sisters dead.

A Valuable Public Career.

Mr William Taubman Crennell was the eldest son of the late Mr Wm. Crennell, Member for Ramsey, and his mother was a Miss Taubman of Ballaugh (sister of Messrs. E. M. and W. H. Taubman.) He was educated at Ramsey Wesleyan School and afterwards at Penrith School, under Mr Bell, and it is significant that his old schoolmaster has taken a great interest in the public life of his former pupil right up to the end. After completing his education, he entered business in his father's shop as a grocer and provision dealer and eventually succeeded to the business himself, retiring in 1913. He was early trained and marked out for public life. In this sense the Wesleyan Mutual Improvement Society played a prominent part. As a young man of 18 he took a very vigorous and active share in the debates organised by that Society, developed his elocutionary powers, and was in those early days a debater to be feared. In some of the educative discussions such gentlemen as Mr J. R. Cowell, Mr John Spanton, Mr R. Brew, Mr T. Teare, and men of like calibre took part, and it was in this arena that he won his spurs as a speaker. Mr Crennell was a Shakesperian reciter of much ability, and his elocutionary powers were often displayed on public platforms. He first entered public life in 1896, when, along with Mr Thos. Cowley and Mr R. G. Corkhill, he fought a vigorous contest for the Ramsey Town Board successfully. At that time, many public improvements were on the tapis in Ramsey; the Municipality was alive, and the development of the town evoked keen interest. His work at the Town Board was of a very useful character, and he mastered all the details of local affairs. He was elevated to the chair of the Board for two years, viz 1900 to 1902. Next we find him keenly interested in local education matters and opposed the policy of the Ramsey School Board at exciting public meetings held in the Old Cross Hall, in which, needless to say, he was the leader of the opposition His advent into politics began on the occasion of the memorable General Election of 1898, when Mr J. R. Cowell was opposed by Mr T. Cowley for the representation of Ramsey. The great bone of contention at that time was the Permit System, and Mr Crennell championed Mr Cowley against the sitting member Mr Cowell, who was at that time at the zenith of his power. The election was a fierce one. Mr Crennell's speeches criticising Mr J. R. Cowell's policy were of the most powerful and demolishing character. The town was cloven in twain, and feeling ran high, the result however, was, that Mr Cowell was returned by a substantial vote. Mr Crennell himself actually entered the Legislature in 1902, when he was returned unopposed for the Sheading of Michael at a bye election, caused by the death of Mr John Kaighin. He represented the Sheading along with the late Mr J. C. Crellin for some years, but resigned his seat because he was at divergence with his constituents over the Education Bill which provided for One Authority. Michael Sheading afterwards regretted the loss of the Hon. Member, but, needless to say, he was adamant. After a brief period of absence from the Legislature he was returned unopposed for Ramsey in 1908, upon the retirement of Mr Hall Caine. Then in 1913, he defended the seat against Mr R. S. Corlett. That contest is still fresh in the minds of the public. Upon that occasion, the late Hon. Member's speeches were regarded as masterpieces being most able expositions of his political creed and of statesmanship. After a fierce contest, Mr Crennell retained the seat by nine votes. The election was fought on the Reform question principally—so far as it is possible to wage elections in the Island really on public matters, as against personal predilections. Since his return to the House in 1913 and during the past five years, he has worked with abounding zeal and devotion as a legislator and administrator. He was recognised by all members as the virtual leader of the House; its ablest and most fearless debater in Tynwald and in the Lower Branch. His judgment and masterly grasp of all matters evoked unstinted admiration from his colleagues, who time and again expressed their appreciation of his great powers and unfailing standard of political honour. He commenced his new term in the Legislature by taking charge of the Reform Bills, which he successfully piloted through the House of Keys. Always ready to meet objections, he had every detail in hand and was prepared for every situation. A most determined upholder of Constitutional rights, he resented with almost fierce vehemence any attempt on the part of officialism in London or Manxland to tamper with or detract from the authority of the Keys as representing the people, and again and again he crossed swords with the Council, the Home Office, and other powers on the rights of Tynwald or of the House of Keys. His speeches in the Legislature were always carefully prepared, full of sound arguments, supported by endless data—and he went to infinite trouble to deal with every aspect of a subject. He was particularly careful not to hide any facts which had a bearing upon any topic with which he was dealing, even if they were against his particular view always preferring to have the truth, and the whole truth. He won the respect and esteem of his opponents, because they knew that he was transparently sincere and honest as a politician. In the debates in Tynwald he could be at times very critical, even sarcastic, and was absolutely fearless and independent in speech and action. He was on every Board and Committee of Tynwald and the House of Keys. Frequently he visited London as a member of deputations to the Home Office in the days when Mr McKenna and Mr Samuel were Home Secretaries respectively, on matters of Reform and Insular finance, and he did not hesitate in London, as well as at home, to always champion the rights of the Manx Parliament against the interference of the Home Office. Indeed, in this respect he was undoubtedly one of the greatest fighters the Island has ever possessed, and most vigorously and with complete conviction persisted in upholding the independence and status of the Island. In this direction only during the past year he drew up a memorandum as to the rights of Tynwald to control Insular finance and revenue, a document which was adopted by Tynwald as unanswerable, and which conclusively set forth the Insular rights. This manifesto is now one of the declarations of the House of Keys on the subject. Some of his speeches, in the Keys, and in Tynwald, especially on Reform and the powers of the Manx Legislature, were regarded as standards of logic, and occupy the larger portion of the Manx Hansard for the period in question. Recently he had been member of the Income Tax Committee, and his last achievement in the Keys was to successfully pilot through the Adult Suffrage Bill, which was always dear to his heart, and with its completion he finished his work in the Manx Legislature. It was his crowning achievement. The Hon. Member was always in touch with his constituents, and annually met them in public meeting, giving each year an able review of Manx political affairs, and of his stewardship. As Chairman of the Council of Education, he was a past master, and his labours for the boys and girls of Manxland has ever been of the most enduring and useful kind. He had expansive views as to the development of education in the Island, and was impatient of our lethargy. Had he been spared, there is little doubt that many of his schemes based on Mr Fisher's new Bill would have matured. One of the chief causes of Mr Crennell's conspicuous success in administrative circles was that nothing was too small for his notice, and every detail received the most complete attention. In addition to being a member of all the Committees of Tynwald, relating especially to war measures, he was appointed a member of the War Loans Committee, but he refused to accept the seat, as a protest against what he considered to be the dictatorship of the Home Office in nominating members of that Committee in defiance of the will of Tynwald. Only this year, His Excellency the Governor nominated Mr Crennell as a member of the Harbour Board, and in this capacity he already has done good work. He was also offered a salaried post under the Government, but respectfully declined a handsome offer, as he felt it would have interfered with his independence and liberty to criticise the Government, remarking, "With a great price obtained I this freedom." Since the outbreak of war he has thrown himself with herculean strength of mind and soul into the duties of the war. He had a profound hatred for Germany, and a sublime conviction as to the Righteousness of Britain and America. His last and greatest work for the little Manx Nation has been as Chairman of the Local Tribunal, and the testimony of his colleagues of that important body is unanimously to the effect that he has proved an ideal Chairman in every respect, displaying judicial calmness and scrupulous care in dealing with every case which came before the Tribunal. He had a quick and ready grasp of all the points of the Military Service Acts, and administered these with conscientious and gentlemanly ability. He kept for himself a minute record of every case, and guided the Tribunal again and again in the right direction, and also defended its action in Tynwald. There is little doubt but that the great anxiety and responsibility of Tribunal work and the constant labour involved was a severe strain upon his constitution. The late Mr Crennell was a member of the Prince of Wales' Relief Committee, which has done such splendid work in assisting those affected by the war, and in this capacity he helped scores of those in distress. As a magistrate, it is needless to say when he has sat on the Bench his judgments have always been sound, and during the illness of the late High Bailiff Cruickshank he presided at the Licensing Sessions. His life in Ramsey has been equally generous and full. The little town he loved so well was always his care, and he laid himself out all the day and every day he could spare from his busy life in Douglas, to help his own people. To mention even his positions in Ramsey is enough. He was member of the Lifeboat Committee, Hospital Committee, Bowling Club, Secretary and Treasurer of the Children's Home, Treasurer of the Belgian Homes in Ramsey, member of the Pensions Committee, Soldiers' and Sailors' Committee, Director of Ramsey Water Works Co., Trustee of Quayle's Charity Estate, and many other estates; Trustee of the Wesleyan Chapel and Schools, and a manager of the Wesleyan Day Schools, and yet this active man, filled with the cares of State and the hundred and one affairs of the world, found time every Sunday morning to teach a Sunday School class, and to play the organ occasionally at the Wesleyan Chapel. He was always ready to help any Church or social movement by presiding at public meetings, and one of his last public appearance in Ramsey was as Chairman of the Workers' Union annual meeting, when he delivered one of his characteristically fearless and progressive speeches. The last time he actually took part in public life in Ramsey was a week or two ago, when he had an interesting and lively conference with the fishermen at the Lifeboat House, relative to the three mile limit. His final earthly duty was in attending the Synod of the Wesleyan Church at Castletown. This closed the valuable career of one who has served his generation to the full, who did justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God. The Member for Ramsey was a keen, able and successful statesman, a brave patriot, a splendid citizen, and yet one of the gentlest, humblest and most unassuming men who ever walked this earth. He has earned the approval of all honest men to the full, and we have little doubt but that the verdict of Heaven upon this brave, pure, honest soul is, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

AN APPRECIATION.

(By Our Maritime Correspondent.)

Whilst the lamented death of Mr Crennell is a great loss to the Manx community generally, nowhere perhaps will that loss be more keenly felt than in local maritime and fishing affairs. The late Hon. Member took a lively and practical interest in all matters pertaining to the port, and was ever ready to give of his sound counsel and advice backed up by his sturdy support in the Legislature to any movement which had for its object the advancement and well being of the community at large. Only recently, we had several instances of this in relation to the question of inshore trawling. When an attempt was made in certain quarters to suspend or relax the three mile limit regulations, Mr Crennell, along with several of his colleagues, declined to be a party thereto until he had consulted a section of his constituents, whose livelihood depended upon line fishing. The late Hon. Member called more than one meeting of fishermen together, and put the situation plainly before them with the result that a number appeared and gave evidence before the Fishery Board on the subject. When the Board's report was issued, it favoured the relaxation of some restrictions, and the late Hon. Member, along with Mr Cormode and others, was able to have the matter held up in the Tynwald Court until he had a further opportunity of meeting the Ramsey fishermen. That meeting was held only a few weeks ago, and those of us who were present, will remember with what lucidity Mr Crennell reviewed the whole situation and the satisfaction which was expressed on all hands for the enormous amount of trouble he had taken. Then, again, the late Member was second to none for the pride and interest he took in the lifeboat and its work and it is perhaps divulging no secret now to say that he counted his election to the Lifeboat Committee a few years ago as nothing less than a high honour. Regular in his attendance at meetings at services, and practices, he did what he could to further the cause of "The Red Cross of the Sea," and his death has created a vacancy it will be most difficult to fill. The selection of Mr Crennell as a Harbour Commissioner a short time back was hailed with satisfaction in Ramsey and the North of the Island, and it was felt that we had a representative on this important Board who would not be lacking in looking after our interests in particular, whilst his ability and energy would be of untold benefit to the Island generally. Now all our hopes and visions have been banished. Mr Crennell's work is finished. But his soul goes marching on and the fruits of his lasting labours will be reaped by the generations which are yet to come.

The Funeral.

The funeral of the late gentleman is to take place on Saturday, and will be a public one. The remains will leave his late residence, Sunnyside, May Hill, at 2 p.m. for the Wesleyan Chapel, where the funeral service will be conducted by the Rev. W. J. Hannam (superintendent minister.) The interment will take place at Andreas, and the Lord Bishop, who was a personal friend of the late Member, will take part. The public bodies, school children, etc., will assemble at May Hill at 1.45, and join the procession to the church, afterwards walking to the outskirts of the town.

ORDER OF PROCESSION:

Inspector King has undertaken to marshal the procession as follows, at the residence at 1.45 in the following order:—

Children of Sunday School, Day School and Children's Home.
Sidesmen and Trustees of Waterloo Road Wesleyan Chapel.
Members of Ramsey Board of Guardians
Members of Ramsey School Board.
Members of Bowling Club.
Members of Hospital Committee.
Members of Lifeboat Committee.
Members of Ramsey Town Board.
The High-Bailiff and Magistrates.
The Speaker and Members of the Legislature.
The Coffin
Mourners.
General Public.

The coffin will be borne from the residence to the Wesleyan Chapel, and the procession will there open out to allow it to pass through into the chapel.

On leaving the chapel the procession will re-form in the above order, and proceed as far as the Cottage Hospital, where it will open out to allow the cortege to proceed through to Andreas.