

COUNCILLOR FINED



Sequel to Shooting Accident

FIREARMS ACT OFFENCE

THE accidental shooting in the mouth of a young married woman, Mrs Catherine M'Lusky, of 2A Jackson Street, Coatbridge, in a Coatbridge pawn office, on the night of March 4, had a sequel at Airdrie Sheriff Court, yesterday, when a member of Coatbridge Town Council appeared on a charge under the Firearms' Act.

Accused was James M'Dougall, pawnbroker, 16 Inveresk Place, Coatbridge, and he admitted that on March 4, in the premises known as the Central Loan Office, at 2 Church Street, Coatbridge, occupied by him, he had in his possession a Webley and Scott 3.2 automatic pistol without holding a firearm certificate.

The Fiscal, Mr W. W. Allan, stated that accused had apparently got the weapon from a woman in 1937. He did not dispose of it, and did not hold a necessary certificate.

For M'Dougall it was stated by Mr Ian Dickson, solicitor, Coatbridge, that the pistol had been the property of a Coatbridge man who died in 1937, and was survived by a widow who was a very delicate and neurasthenic person. Accused was an old friend of the family, and the woman asked him to dispose of certain of her husband's effects.

CALLS AT WIDOW'S HOUSE TO ARRANGE FOR DISPOSAL

Among these was the pistol which accused said he could not get rid of, but all the effects were later sent to him by the widow. Afterwards, accused had called on her to arrange for the disposal of the pistol, but on each occasion she was either ill or away travelling for her health.

Coming to the date of the accident, Mr Dickson said accused's explanation was that while clearing out at the period of their quarterly sales he came across the pistol, which he then said would have to go. He put it on one side, and it was while lying at one side to be removed elsewhere, either to be returned to the owner, thrown into the Monkland Canal, or given to the police, that the occurrence took place. As a result accused had suffered great worry, anxiety, and distress, as well as expense otherwise borne by the Crown, which he himself had voluntarily undertaken to pay. Had he been a warehouseman, he could have had this weapon without having a certificate.

Sheriff Gillies imposed a fine of £2, with the option of 20 days imprisonment, on accused, and said: "It must be understood that one of the most important things, especially in these times, when dealing with firearms, is that when a firearm comes into the possession of anyone they must, unless protected by some Act, report the matter to the police. That was where you failed in your duty, probably through ignorance."

The pistol was declared forfeited