

OBITUARY.

GEORGE BALFOUR, J.P., M.P., was born in Portsmouth on the 30th November, 1872, and died in London on the 26th September, 1941. He was one of the pioneers of electricity-supply development in Great Britain, and through his direction of the Scottish Power Company Limited, the Midland Counties Electricity Supply Co. Ltd., the Metropolitan Electric Supply Company, Limited, the London Power Company, Limited, and the Lancashire Power Company, Limited, of all which he was Chairman, and in his capacity as a director of many other companies, he had a great influence on such development over very large areas of England and Scotland.

The firm of Balfour, Beatty & Co. Ltd., which, in conjunction with the late Mr. A. H. Beatty, he founded in 1909, and of which he was the active Chairman until his death, carried out many important engineering contracts under his leadership, including the Lochaber water-power scheme, carried out for the British Aluminium Company; the Grampian Electricity Supply Company's hydro-electric development; and the construction of the Kut barrage on the Euphrates for the Iraq Government.

In 1922, Power Securities Corporation was founded to finance electricity development and general engineering enterprises all over the world. Balfour, Beatty & Co. Ltd., became a wholly-owned subsidiary of that Corporation, of which Mr. Balfour was Chairman until his death. Mr. Balfour's name was also well known abroad, particularly in the Argentine and Uruguay; and in Malaya through his Chairmanship of the Perak River Hydro-Electric Power Co. Ltd., which he assumed at the request of H.M. Treasury.

Mr. Balfour received his early engineering training with Messrs. Urquhart Lindsay & Co. of Dundee, with whom he remained for a short time after his apprenticeship was completed. He then joined the firm of Lowden Brothers & Co. Ltd., of Dundee, of which later he became a Director, and in 1903 he went to London to join the firm of Messrs. J. G. White & Co., which was engaged largely on tramway construction. In 1909 he struck out independently and, as mentioned above, joined with Mr. Beatty, a colleague in J. G. White's, in founding the firm of Balfour, Beatty & Co. Ltd.

No mention of Mr. Balfour would be complete without reference to his political interests. Brought up in the Gladstonian Liberal tradition, his independent and inquiring mind could not reconcile its tenets with realities as he understood them, and he became a staunch Conservative. In 1910 and again in 1911 he contested the Govan Division of Lanarkshire in the Unionist interest and, though not returned, succeeded in greatly reducing the Labour majorities. In 1918 he was invited to stand for Hampstead as the Conservative and Unionist candidate; he was elected by a large majority and continued to represent Hampstead in Parliament until his death.

Mr. Balfour was elected an Associate of The Institution on the 14th April, 1931.

In 1901 he married Margaret Malloch, the elder daughter of Mr. David Mathers, J.P., of Dundee, and had one daughter and four sons, all of whom survive him.

MAURICE DEACON was born on the 11th November, 1850, and died at Whatstandwell, near Matlock, on the 25th September, 1941. After serving his pupilage, in 1866 and 1867, with Messrs. Giles and Brookhouse, of Derby, he was engaged in making geological plans for the Coal Commission and in surveying coal and iron-ore deposits in South Wales. In 1871 he was appointed resident engineer and manager of the Plasycod Colliery, South Wales, and in 1874 became consulting engineer to the Bath Colliery Company. In 1876 he designed and superintended the construction of a large mining plant at Bettisfield colliery, North Wales, and in 1878 started a consulting practice at Pontypool. He also acted as general manager and engineer to the Manners Colliery Company, of Ilkeston, and the Blackwell Colliery Company, and as consulting engineer to the West Hallam Coal & Iron Company. In 1896 he began his long association with the Sheepbridge Coal and Iron Co., Ltd., at first as general manager and later as managing director, which position he occupied until 1924, being largely responsible for the success of the Company. In addition he served as chairman or director of numerous other colliery and commercial undertakings and assisted in the development and management of many collieries, iron and steel works, rolling mills, foundries, coke-ovens, and by-product plants in Great Britain and abroad. He also appeared frequently as an expert witness before Parliamentary Committees in connexion with mining questions. During the 1914-18 war he acted as adviser to the War Office in connexion with the reconstruction of the French coal mines destroyed by the Germans, and was a member of a committee of French mining engineers under the French Ministry of Mines.

Mr. Deacon was elected an Associate Member of The Institution on the 7th December, 1886, and was transferred to the class of Member on the 20th December, 1892: he served on the Council from November 1914 to November 1921. He was also a Past-President of the Institution of Mining Engineers, and a Governor of Sheffield University.

He married, first, Miss Adelaide Bageley, of Cornwall, and secondly, Miss Millicent Dounes, of Shropshire, and had one son and four daughters.

CORRIGENDUM.

November 1941 Journal. Page 104, Footnote. For "Min. Proc. Mech. C.E., vol. cxc" read "Min. Proc. Inst. C.E., vol. cxc".