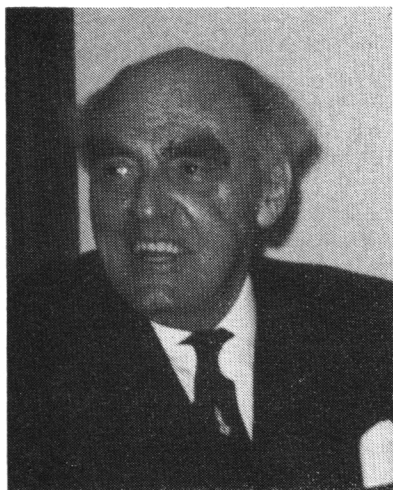




**The Rt Hon. The Lord John Charles Walsham Reith, KT, PC, GCVO, GBE, CB, TD, DCL, LLD, MSc, First Baron of Stonehaven**

who was born on 20 July, 1889, died on 16 June, 1971.

Educated at Glasgow Academy and at Gresham's School, Holt, Norfolk, he studied engineering from 1906–8 at the Royal Technical College, Glasgow.

There followed five years of practical training under Sir Hugh Reid and Mr Andrew T. Reid, after which in 1913 Reith joined the North British Locomotive Company Limited. In 1914 he became assistant engineer on dock construction to

Messrs S. Pearson and Son Limited, superintending concreting and maintenance of machinery manned by some 200 men. But the advent of World War I upended his plans. Since 1911 Reith had held a commission in the Territorials and in October 1914 he was sent to France with the 5th Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) where he served during the winter of that year. The following autumn he was severely wounded by a sniper's bullet which almost ended his life and left an obvious facial scar. Unfit for further active service, he was transferred with the rank of Major in the Royal Engineers to special duties.

Sir E. W. Moir (of Pearson and Son Limited) had been sent to the United States to organize fresh munition supplies, and in 1916 he cabled for young Reith to join him. As a result he spent some 20 months in America inspecting small arms contracts (rifles particularly—a £2 m. contract), with 600 inspectors under him. Later he also supervised 1100 men in the American section.

Back in England there followed six months with the Royal Engineers on special construction work on the South Coast, with the rank of Major, RE (T). From 1918 to 1919 he worked at the Admiralty in the department of the Civil Engineer-in-Chief, Sir Alexander Gibb, supervising over 2000 men on varied work from muck-shifting to steel construction. He then spent a year with the Ministry of Munitions in charge of liquidation of ordnance and engineering contracts to the value of £13 m. In 1920 he was appointed General Manager of William Beardmore and Company Limited, producers of land and marine oil engines, steam engines, pumps, etc., and set about reorganizing the factory from a war- to peace-time footing.

It was in 1922 that Reith saw advertised the post of General Manager of the British Broadcasting Company: he applied and got the job. So started the sixteen most rewarding years of his life, during which he was indeed 'fully

stretched'—years for which he will long be remembered as the creator of British broadcasting and founder of its traditions. In 1923 he became Managing Director and in 1927 Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation.\*

Son of a Free Church Minister of the Church of Scotland, John Reith was reared against a Calvinist background which shaped his whole attitude to life. Although in 1922 he was a successful engineer and got positive joy from the processes of construction, he was not satisfied. 'I still believe there is some great work for me to do in this world' he noted in his diary after hearing a stirring sermon. He was not slow to grasp the enormous potential of the new media, but characteristically thought of broadcasting as a means to social betterment rather than as entertainment. His insistence on Sunday observance did little to endear him to the critics. Yet by and large the silent majority of the British public gave him their solid support and approved his handling of unprecedented situations. He fought off attempts by the Government to control the Corporation during the General Strike and later, and when Edward VIII broadcast his abdication speech from Windsor, Reith faultlessly stage-managed this occasion.

Persuaded that his work at the BBC was accomplished, he left the Corporation at the age of 49 to become Chairman of Imperial Airways (1938). In 1940 Chamberlain made him Minister of Information, whence he was transferred by Churchill, briefly, to the Ministry of Transport, then to the Ministry of Works and Buildings, later known as the Ministry of Works and Planning. Almost immediately after the change of title Reith left the Government and in 1942 joined the RNVR as Lt-Commander, Coastal Forces. In 1943 he was Extra Naval Assistant to the Third Sea Lord, and from 1943–45, with the rank of Captain, RNVR, was Director of Combined Operations Material Department, Admiralty. In 1945 he toured the Commonwealth and Empire as Chairman of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference: he was also Chairman of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Board (1946–50), of the National Film Finance Corporation (1948–51), and of the Colonial Development Corporation (1950–59). In 1962 he delivered the Closing Address to the Institution's CEPO Conference (CEPO, 1962, 373). In recent years he was vice-chairman of the British Oxygen Company and a director of the Phoenix Assurance Company and of Tube Investments Limited.

From 1965 to 1968 he was Lord Rector of Glasgow University: in 1967 and 1968 he was appointed Lord High Commissioner of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Reith was knighted in 1927, awarded the GBE in 1934 and the GCVO in 1939. He became a Privy Councillor in 1940 and in February, 1969 was made a Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle (KT). He was a member of the Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland, The Royal Company of Archers.† In 1967 he appeared in a series of three television programmes in which he discussed his life and work with Malcolm Muggeridge.

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\* The Corporation then comprised four Divisions, of which the largest was Engineering.

† Among other honorary awards, he became a DCL (Oxford, 1935), an LLD (Aberdeen 1933, Manchester 1933, Glasgow 1951). He was an Honorary Fellow of the RIBA and of the Institute of Landscape Architects, and an Honorary Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and of the Institution of Municipal Engineers. In 1947 the BBC inaugurated the Reith Lectures in his honour.

A man of towering eminence, 6 ft 6 in. in height, Reith was alarmingly direct and outspoken and his convictions were unalterable. By nature he was sensitive and austere—qualities which may have increased his sense of isolation in later life. But to those who knew his disarming smile he was kindness personified.

He was for 55 years on the Roll. Elected to membership in 1916, he was transferred to the senior grade in 1937.

He is survived by his widow, Lady Reith, and a son and daughter.



**Brigadier-General Sir Godfrey (Dean) Rhodes, CB, CBE, DSO**

who was born on 18 July, 1886, died on 21 February, 1971.

Educated at Trinity College, Port Hope, Ontario, and at the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, graduating with Honours, he received a commission in the Royal Engineers in 1907. After study at the School of Military Engineering, Chatham, and a year with the London and South Western Railway, he was in 1910 posted to India as an Assistant Engineer with the State Railways. For the next four years he was engaged on the design and construction of new railways in the north-west Punjab.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 he was posted to France where he was engaged on railway construction work until transfer in 1915 to the Salonika front, where he remained until 1919, ending his service there as Director of Railways with the rank of Brigadier-General. For his services in World War I he was three times mentioned in dispatches and was awarded the DSO, CBE, Legion of Honour (Officer), Order of Redeemer (Greek) and the Order of the White Eagle (Serbian).

In 1921 Rhodes was seconded from the Royal Engineers to be Chief Engineer of the Uganda Railway (completed less than 20 years before). The system consisted of the main line from Mombasa to Kisumu, the military branch from Voi to Kabe, the Magadi branch, the Thika tramway and two isolated lines in Uganda. Traffic had grown rapidly during and after the First World War. In this turbulent phase of swift expansion when each year's earnings set new records it was clear that much had to be done quickly to increase the capacity of the railway and extend its services. In this task Rhodes played a notable part as Chief Engineer, throwing himself into the work with great energy and enthusiasm.

Within seven years work was almost completed on the Uganda extension from Eldoret to Mbulamuti on the Busoga Railway, the Thika-Nyeri line and