



Sir Reginald William Taylor,
CMG, BSc

who was born on 1 December, 1895, died on 19 October, 1971.

Educated at St Lawrence College, Ramsgate, he studied engineering at University College, London, taking an Honours BSc(Eng) degree in 1920. His student life started in 1913, but was interrupted by the First World War, in which he served in France from 1914-18. He then returned to University College.

Taylor was to make his name overseas in African states whose fast-growing economies called for rapid development. In Uganda, Nigeria and Kenya the results of his work are evident: airports, roads, bridges and

reservoirs underline the scope and extent of his contribution to civilized living in countries now independent.

Starting in Uganda as an assistant engineer to the Public Works Department, he became in 1929 Executive Engineer, in charge first of Western, then of Central Province. He was responsible for the construction of some 200 miles of road, several bridges, numerous houses and offices, and supervised many sources of water supply. This continued until in 1937 he was appointed Senior Executive Engineer to the PWD, Nigeria, at a time of vast expansion. In charge of the Lagos Division and also Acting Director at headquarters, he was answerable for new buildings, roads and water supplies, and investigated the bearing strengths of Nigerian airfields. The design of several airfields, including those at Lagos and Kano, was also his responsibility.

From 1945-48, as DPW, he assisted the Director, Sir Hubert Walker, mainly in an administrative capacity, organizing and controlling works which from year to year snowballed in value from under £2 m. immediately after the war to over £6½ m. in 1950-51.

In 1948 Taylor himself became Director of Public Works, when that Department was undertaking a large building and construction programme which included Legislative Council buildings at Ibadan and Enugu, the Regional Council buildings at Kaduna, 6-storey office blocks, etc. A hundred-and-twenty miles of bitumen surfaced roads were completed, and 28 bridges. Foggo Bridge, 1170' long, was still under construction. A new runway was provided for Lagos airfield, another designed for Kano, and Lagos water supplies were extended to provide 10 m. gpd.

In 1951 he transferred to Kenya, whose expansion programme fell little short of Nigeria's vast improvements. Here as Director of Public Works his responsibilities included the 5-storey Treasury building, numerous schools and hospitals, and plans for an extension of Mombasa's water supply via a 150-mile prestressed concrete pipeline. Construction of the Royal Technical College was also put in hand, many office blocks built, the High Court at Kisumu and Tara River Bridge completed. Construction of the new Nairobi airport

started in 1953 and within a year work began on new secretariat buildings in Nairobi and prestressed concrete reservoirs in Mombasa. In 1954 Sir Reginald retired as Director of Public Works, Kenya, and returned to settle in England, where until 1961 he was engaged as Engineer-in-Chief to the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations. When Sierra Leone became independent, he flew out there to represent the Crown Agents on this occasion.

He was made a CMG in 1951 and received a knighthood in 1958. In 1963 he was elected a Fellow of his old College.

In later life Sir Reginald gave much time to the Institution: he served on the Council for four years, representing Overseas Territories from 1958–62. Before being transferred to the Membership Committee in 1958 he was a member of the Professional Committee. He was also retained to study the three training schemes for young engineers recognized by the Council, and submitted his report in 1964.

His contributions to technical literature include two books and several papers, two of which were delivered to the Institution (see under).

A likeable man of quiet authority and many endearing traits, he was considerate to his staff, preferring to call on them rather than interrupt their work with a summons to his office. In earlier years he played excellent tennis and he was, throughout his life, a gifted artist in water-colours. Philately was one of his hobbies, and in his retirement he looked after the Institution's stamp collection.

It is said that the airports of Kano and Nairobi are his memorials—as are many other civilized features of the landscape in Nigeria and Kenya.

He was elected to corporate membership in 1947, and transferred to the senior grade in 1954.

He is survived by his widow, and two sons.

Publications:

Books:

'Aerodrome Construction', 1945.

'Nigerian Highways', Report on the Highways of Nigeria, 1951.

Papers:

'Aspects of carrying out work overseas by contract: the viewpoint of the Director of Public Works', CEPO, 1958, 356. 'The organization of a Public Works Department', CEPO (June, 1960), 9. Discussion: 30.