

The name of Arthur B. Wood stands as a synonym for honour and integrity and he was held, not only in the respect, but also in the affections of those who knew him. He combined rare qualities of leadership and intelligence, sound judgment and humour, sympathetic understanding and a keen interest in his fellow man. He is gone from us now, but he left many monuments to his wisdom and selflessness, and the certainty that his memory will be cherished by us all.

G. W. B.

JAMES MURRAY LAING

At the time of his sudden death on 15 June 1952, James Murray Laing had completed over fifty years of active service in life assurance.

Born on 15 November 1879, he was educated at Shawlands Academy, Glasgow. In 1894 he obtained a post with the Glasgow Branch of the British Empire Mutual and served under Col. McLeod Robertson, with whom he remained on terms of close friendship for the rest of his life. He began to take the examinations of the Federation of Insurance Institutes, and later, becoming interested in actuarial work, he joined the Actuarial Department of the City of Glasgow Life Assurance Company. After passing two examinations of the Faculty of Actuaries, he moved to London to the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia. He became a Fellow of the Faculty of Actuaries in 1905 and a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries in 1907.

In March 1908 Murray Laing left London for Birmingham to join the Britannic Assurance Company as Head of the Ordinary Branch. He became Assistant Secretary in 1914 and two years later he was appointed Secretary and Actuary. In 1920 he was elected to a seat on the Board of Directors, and in 1947 he was made Deputy Chairman and a Managing Director.

Murray Laing made a close study of the first National Insurance Act and was closely connected with the administration of the National Amalgamated Approved Society, and later became Vice-Chairman in 1936. For many years he attended meetings of the Executive of the body now known as the Industrial Life Offices Association, and was Chairman for two years from October 1945. At the Jubilee Conference of the I.L.O.A. in November 1951 he read a paper on *Improvements in Industrial Assurance during the past Fifty Years*, a subject dear to his heart.

He took an active part in the discussions which preceded the passing of the Industrial Assurance Act, 1923, and shortly afterwards submitted papers on various aspects of this Act both to the Institute and to the Students' Society. He gave a further paper, *Notes on the New National Life Tables*, to the Institute in 1928. In 1945, in a paper to the Faculty on *Life Assurance—Past and Present*, he reviewed the changes in life office practice during the previous fifty years.

Except for short intervals Murray Laing was a member of the Institute Council from 1921 to 1941, and he became a Vice-President in 1932; he was also a member of the Council of the Faculty of Actuaries from 1934 to 1939. He attended four International Congresses and on each occasion took part in the discussions. In 1935 he visited South Africa, and the next year went to Canada and the United States, where he met many of the outstanding men in North American life assurance. He again visited Canada and America in 1938, this time as a member of the party of British actuaries attending a joint conference of the Actuarial Society of America and the American Institute of Actuaries. He was a member

of the Gallio and Actuaries' Clubs and was a founder member of the Denarius Club.

A diffident speaker as a young man, he later became very fluent and was the despair of all but the most rapid shorthand writers. He took an active part in the proceedings of the Birmingham Insurance Institute and was chosen as its President when the Chartered Insurance Institute held its Annual Conference in Birmingham in 1921. He gave numerous papers to Insurance Institutes in different parts of the country.

A man of tremendous vigour, Murray Laing was a tireless worker, and to the end he never spared himself in his efforts either for his own office or for the business of life assurance as a whole. In fact, although he had recently suffered two grievous blows, the loss of his dear wife and his own serious illness culminating in the amputation of a leg, he was at the office in his usual good spirits only two days before his death. As is often the way of the busiest of men, he found time to take an active part in many local institutions, being a valued and respected worker for local hospitals and convalescent homes, and a Past President of the Midland Scottish Society.

He leaves a son and three daughters, and a number of grandchildren; he was as devoted to his family as he was to his business.

Those of us whose good fortune it was to know Murray Laing will remember him as a man of rare natural charm and courtesy, a truly enthusiastic man of remarkable energy. He did much to raise Industrial Assurance in public estimation and was a credit to his calling. He was so versatile that he would have undoubtedly made a success of almost any career, and that he chose as he did was to the great benefit of life assurance and the actuarial profession. J. A. J.

STEUART EDYE MACNAGHTEN

WHEN Capt. Elliot Henry Macnaghten of the 20th Hussars was killed in action in 1878, he left a wife, three daughters and a son (Steuart Ede) who had been born on 7 July 1873. They came of a well-known family that had migrated from Scotland to Ireland some generations back, and anyone who cares to look up *Burke's Peerage* will find in the family the names of several people distinguished in one way or another including, for instance, Lord Macnaghten—the famous lawyer—and Hugh Vibart Macnaghten who was Vice-Provost of Eton and a gifted writer on the classics.

Steuart Macnaghten was brought up as a child in South Africa—his mother's home—went to Dale College, King William's Town, then came to England, had some private education and two years at Bedford School before he was sent to the R.M.A. Woolwich with the idea that he would follow in his father's footsteps and become a soldier. He was unable to complete his course owing to a serious illness, which I think he told me originated in a chill aggravated by playing Rugby football when he ought to have been in bed. He went back to South Africa to recover his health; he returned in improved condition, but only one lung could function and he knew that he must start life afresh. Having a bent for mathematics he studied for the F.I.A., which he obtained in 1900; concurrently he worked at accountancy and became an A.C.A. in 1901. A post in the Equity and Law was found for him, and in a few years he went as Assistant Actuary to the Equitable under Lidstone. Those were the stepping-stones that led him to leave London in 1912 and go to Edinburgh as Actuary to the Standard. Leonard Dickson had recently been appointed Manager and the two of them, knowing