

OBITUARIES

Prof. A. G. Ogilvie, O.B.E.

THE sudden death of Alan Grant Ogilvie, who collapsed while attending a meeting of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society on the evening of February 9, takes from our midst one of the few remaining pioneers of the new geography as a university discipline. Born in Edinburgh in 1887, he maintained throughout his life much of the dignity and Victorian charm characterizing his childhood home—the son of a distinguished if austere father, the late Sir Francis Ogilvie. From George Watson's College and Westminster School, he proceeded to Magdalen College, Oxford, taking his B.A. in 1909. Periods of study at the Geographical Institute of the University of Berlin and at the Sorbonne followed, and gave him a command of European languages and a wide range of academic contacts—further extended by geological studies at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London.

His academic career began in 1912 when he was appointed junior demonstrator in geography at Oxford but was interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1914. Ogilvie had accepted a commission in the 7th London Brigade of the R.F.A. in 1911, so he was immediately called up and served in France, the Dardanelles and Salonika before becoming staff captain at the War Office in 1918. His selection as leader of the Geographical Section of the British Peace Delegation at Versailles was an obvious one. It was there that he began a lasting friendship with Isaiah Bowman, leader of the American Geographical Section. It was often difficult for the few experts present to hide the sometimes abysmal ignorance of the peace-makers concerning the countries and peoples for whom they were legislating. There is no doubt that the state of affairs thus revealed stimulated the establishment of Honours Schools of Geography in most British universities in the decade which followed. Ogilvie was made O.B.E. for his services and was appointed reader in geography at Manchester. The following year, however, Bowman, then director of the American Geographical Society, invited him to New York, and during 1920–23 he was head of the Hispanic American Division of the Society. There he showed his flair for collating work from many and varied sources, evidenced first by his "Geography of the Central Andes" (1922). In 1923 he returned to his native Edinburgh, there to spend the rest of his life, first as lecturer, then as reader (1924) and finally as professor of geography from 1931 until his death.

Ogilvie's writings were neither numerous nor voluminous, but always scholarly and showing evidence of very wide reading. His work as editor and part author of "Great Britain", a series of regional essays prepared for the International Geographical Congress in 1928, remains of lasting value. He served devotedly the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (honorary secretary, 1925–41; president, 1946–50) as well as the British Association (president, Section E, 1934; chairman of Committee on Tropical Africa), the Institute of British Geographers (president, 1951–52) and the International Geographical Union (section president, Lisbon, 1949).

A man of great intellectual integrity himself and not always robust physically, he refused to condone lower standards in others, and perhaps envied the

greater facilities for field-work and research enjoyed by the younger academic men of to-day. To them he sometimes appeared austere and even intolerant, but many grew later to know him as a sincere friend. His solid Edinburgh home meant much to him, and he felt very deeply the recent loss of his wife after a trying illness. He himself will be greatly missed.

L. DUDLEY STAMP

Mr. David Milne, C.I.E.

MR. DAVID MILNE, who died recently, was one of the fast-dwindling members of the Indian Agricultural Service, which was started about 1903 and the members of which by their devoted labours did so much to improve agriculture in India and from which she is now reaping the benefit.

Born in Scotland in 1876, Milne was educated in the University of Aberdeen, where he took his degree in science. His first appointment was to Egypt, where he was agricultural chemist to the Corporation of West Egypt, and when, no doubt, he made his first contact with cotton, a crop with which he was intimately concerned for the remainder of his career.

In 1907 he joined the Indian Agricultural Service and was posted to the Punjab as economic botanist, a post he held until 1921, when he became principal of the Lyallpur Agricultural College. In 1922, however, he was promoted to be director of agriculture, Punjab, and held this important post until his retirement in 1933, being made C.I.E.

The name of Milne will long be remembered in the Punjab and India for his work in selecting new types of long-staple cotton. The climate of the irrigated areas of the Punjab present certain peculiarities, and the type of plant has to be selected to meet these conditions. After the First World War, there was a shortage of long-staple cotton, and the demand for cotton of the Middling American standard, and even a little longer in staple, was strong both from the Bombay mills as well as from Lancashire. Prior to his arrival, attempts to introduce seed direct from the United States had met with little success, for these varieties failed to thrive under Punjab conditions, and although they obtained a premium on quality, they failed to find popular favour because their yields were very much smaller than the short-stapled Deshi, a native Indian type. By applying modern methods of plant breeding, Milne evolved new varieties of American upland-type cotton which not only withstood jassid and other pests but also gave yields approximating to those given by the native types. The first of these cottons was a variety called 4 F, and it was replaced by a variety with a somewhat longer staple, 284 F, and other selections followed. As a result of his work, American upland cottons of long staple came to be cultivated over very large areas in the Punjab and Sind and did much to meet the demand of the Indian mills.

Although most of his scientific work was applied to cotton, he found time to study other crops as well, and made a detailed study of the possibilities of cultivation of date palm in the Punjab. His "Handbook of Field and Garden Crops in the Punjab" also proved of great value in teaching establishments.

Milne became a member of the Indian Central Cotton Committee and was also on the Council for Agricultural Research in India from 1928 until his retirement in 1933.

G. EVANS