

Sir Robert Patrick Wright, LL.D.

SIR ROBERT WRIGHT may be regarded as in the line of succession to Henry Stephens who was Secretary and Treasurer of the Royal Society Club for sixteen years and wrote the classic *Book of the Farm*. Sir Robert in his turn edited the *Standard Cyclopaedia of Modern Agriculture*, the most useful and comprehensive reference book on agriculture so far published.

The son of a farmer, and a farmer himself, Sir Robert's active mind soon took him beyond the confines of his farm. He had studied the agricultural science of the day at the University of Edinburgh and, debarred from a renewal of his lease by his opinions on land tenure, he set himself to organise agricultural education in the West of Scotland. Beginning with three pupils in the old Technical College, he lived to see the fruition of his efforts in the great College in Glasgow and in the most modern of dairy schools at Auchencruive. Appointed agricultural adviser to the Congested Districts Board, he became almost automatically the first Chairman of the Board of Agriculture.

In the stormy days of Land Settlement, when it was largely a political question, the constructive and lasting work of the Board under Sir Robert's direction was overlooked. The reorganisation of agricultural education until every farmer in every corner of Scotland was entitled to personal advice and instruction was part of his administration. The schemes for the improvement of Livestock were set up during his term, and but for the intervention of the War other valuable developments would have taken place.

Sir Robert was a pioneer. It was he who developed the method of field trials for the dual purpose of instruction and demonstration which, with modification, has been universally adopted. He was the leader of those who made the educational and research structure of Scottish farming second to none. He had the qualities of a leader, courage and persistence in his opinions, great enthusiasm, powers of persuasion, and devotion to public service. When temporarily defeated his custom was "reculer pour mieux sauter."

He was a voracious reader and, buried in a book, gave the Rocky Mountains merely a fleeting glance when passing through them, and he has been known to confess that he was more interested in *English Literature than in Land Settlement*.

He was a kind friend and a deeply religious man who remained a convinced "free" churchman; no compromise with a "State" church for him. All his life he was a devoted public servant and a worthy Fellow of the Royal Society to which he was elected in 1896.

He died on December 19, 1938.

R. B. G.