

Robert W. Dron, M.A., M.Inst.C.E., M.Inst.M.E.

PROFESSOR DRON, who attained distinction both as a mining engineer and as a teacher, died at his home at Bearsden on 16th April 1932, at the age of sixty-four. Trained as a mining engineer and surveyor, he entered practice as a consultant in 1901, and founded the firm of R. W. Dron & Son, Civil and Mining Engineers, Glasgow. Though most of his professional work was undertaken in Scotland, he was engaged from time to time to examine mining properties abroad, and visited places as far afield as the Caucasus, Spain, Nova Scotia, California, and Spitzbergen.

His teaching experience dated from the late 'eighties, when he took charge of classes in the West of Scotland attended by mine officials and miners. Most of these students were preparing for the Colliery Manager's Certificate examinations; many of them must have been older than their instructor, and some reached important positions in the industry; but all had reason to be grateful to Dron for his guidance and help. His first book, *A Text Book of Mining Formulae*, published when he was twenty-three years of age, was intended for the assistance of students of that period and type. All through his life he was intensely interested in geology; many of his papers deal with problems of coal-field geology, and since 1902, when his best-known work, *The Coal Fields of Scotland*, was published, he has been a recognised authority on the subject of which it treats. A second and revised edition was issued in 1921.

His last book appeared in 1928, under the title of *The Economics of Coal Mining*. In writing it he had again in view the difficulties and aspirations of the younger generation; he essayed the formidable task of expounding the financial aspects of mining operations, and succeeded in producing a volume that is a model of skilful selection, arrangement, and style. In 1922 he accepted the invitation of the University of Glasgow to the then vacant Dixon Chair of Mining, and at his induction the Senatus conferred on him the honorary degree of Master of Arts.

Dron joined the Mining Institute of Scotland in 1888, and soon became an active member and one of its representatives on the Council of the Institution of Mining Engineers. He was president of the Scottish Institute from 1923 to 1925, and Chairman of the Finance and Publications Committee of the Institution from 1916 to 1931. A year ago he was elected by unanimous vote to the Presidency of the Institution, the highest

professional distinction open to a British mining engineer. He was, however, never to enjoy the honour he had so fully earned. The day after his election he was ordered to bed, and there he stayed for many weary months until he died.

Outside his engineering and University activities, Dron found time to devote to educational interests. In 1910 he was elected to the New Kilpatrick School Board; later becoming Chairman of the Dumbartonshire Education Authority, and, more recently, Chairman of the Education Committee of the County Council.

His touch was sure and skilful, whether in practical matters or in the lecture room, and his wide experience of men and affairs commanded respect. He was a keen and fearless critic in matters concerning those branches of technology of which he was master; yet a man of charm and humour, a delightful companion, and the staunchest of friends.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1917.

H. B.