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VISCOUNT DEVONPORT

WORK FOR LONDON PORT.

RETIREMENT TO-DAY.

It is impossible to think of the Port of London Authority without linking with it the name of Viscount Devonport, who has been chairman since its foundation in 1909; and it will certainly require a long time for all connected with the Authority to habituate themselves to a board meeting over which he is not presiding or, indeed, to contemplate any expression of the port's continued activity without the stimulation of his presence. Yet, as has been known for some time, he is retiring from the position that he has occupied with such distinction throughout the life, so far as it has gone, of the supremely important body which inspires and controls the greatest port in the world. Lord Devonport took up the task to which he has ever since devoted practically his whole energies on March 31, 1909; he relinquishes it to-day, when he is being entertained by the colleagues who, for varying periods, have collaborated with him in the ceaseless effort to improve and still further to extend the gigantic enterprise entrusted to their care.

Though it is well known to the officials and members of the Authority, the public generally can have no conception of the intimate degree to which Lord Devonport has been bound up with the fortunes of the Port of London Authority. The earnestness with which he entered upon the task of guiding the new body which came into being following the buying out of the old dock companies by the Government, for ultimate transference to a public body, may be gathered from the fact that Sir Hudson Ewbanko Kearley, M.P. for Devonport as he then was (he was made a baron in 1910 and a viscount in 1917), gave up his political career, for at the time that he was asked to take up the chairmanship of the Authority he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. As Food Controller he was to come into touch again with Parliament during 1916-17, but, apart from that war service to the country, he relinquished all idea of political life when he became the first chairman of the Port Authority.

SCHEMES OF £14,000,000.

The duty devolving on the Authority, under Section 2 of the Port of London Act, 1908, was "to take into consideration the state of the river, and the accommodation and facilities afforded in the port of London, and to take such steps as they may consider necessary for the improvement thereof." Schemes for the extension of the existing docks, for the deepening and widening of the navigable channels, and for the provision of new accommodation at an estimated cost of approximately £14,000,000, were prepared and adopted, and to the supervision of that stupendous programme Lord Devonport has given throughout sixteen years a daily and detailed attention which has been a subject of wonder and admiration to the experts charged with its execution in various branches. It is no misuse of the word to say that he has consecrated his talents, his energies, and his time to the interests of the port. No man could have done more for his own business—and it is to be remembered that, though a yearly salary of £4,000 was attached to the post, he has refused to accept a penny for his services. He has, too, always generously emphasised the devotion of his colleagues to their great work; in the course of a speech delivered a year ago, when he threw out a hint of his desire to hand over the reins to other hands, he said:

"The work is absorbingly interesting, and we strive to carry it on with one idea and single purpose, viz., the improvement and betterment of the organisation and the facilities of this great port for the benefit and advantage of the trade of this country and of the Empire at large, with which its welfare is so closely and intimately associated."

Though he is so fully entitled to a rest and—curious as it may sound—to some leisure to attend to his own affairs, those who are aware of the obsessing extent to which Lord Devonport has devoted himself to the greater modern glories of the entrepôt port which, going back into far distant ages, has been pre-eminent since the destruction of Antwerp by the

into the distant ages, has been pre-eminent since the destruction of Antwerp by the Spaniards in 1576, will know that it must be a pang to him to quit the scene before the completion of the immense programme of works, many of which were already in the mind of the Authority at the outset of its career. That great scheme was considered in 1911, and soon after major works were taken in hand at London Dock, the West India Docks, and the Albert Docks; the deepening of the river was persistently pursued, and minor works were carried out at the Millwall and Albert Dock graving docks, and in building a riverside jetty at Tilbury for part-cargo vessels. The war, of course, seriously interfered with the progress of the primary programme, but the works in this category may be said to have been completed by the opening in the summer of 1921 by his Majesty of the King George V. Dock, which alone cost about £4,500,000. The total capital expenditure on the works enumerated amounted to about £10,000,000.

SOME BIG PROJECTS.

What may be called the secondary scheme of development laid down in the 1911 programme has been retarded by the world dislocation of trade, but the Authority has now decided to take in hand some of the principal projects then foreshadowed. The first of these undertakings is the development of the West India Docks. The proposal is to connect the southern dock with the north end Millwall Dock, and to connect all three of the West India Docks by cutting channels through the intervening quays so as to allow of access to the group through the Millwall Dock entrance, while the work is being undertaken of constructing a new entrance lock, to take vessels 500ft in length and of 30ft draft, on the site of the existing South Dock entrance. The importance of this scheme will be perceived when it is understood that its completion will bring into use for vessels up to 500ft in length and of 12,000 tons some three miles of valuable quays and some of the best and largest warehouses in the port. Moreover, a vivid idea of what is in progress is gained when it is borne in mind that the completion of the West India Docks' scheme will mean that we shall have vessels of that size brought up to within something like three miles of the City.

The second work concerns Tilbury Docks, where, according to the plans now sanctioned by the Authority—plans greatly modified by comparison with the original ambitious scheme which would have cost £5,000,000—there is to be constructed a new entrance lock 1,000ft long and 110ft wide, with a new dry dock of corresponding dimensions—to serve not only the existing dock, but also its extension which was included in the 1911 full programme, and which can be carried out in part from time to time as required.

The third work now authorised is the much-needed passenger landing-stage at Tilbury, which, though long discussed, has had to be postponed owing to various causes. Now a landing-stage capable of accommodating two large passenger vessels is to be built, and arrangements have been made with the London, Midland, and Scottish Railway Company by which passengers will be disembarked immediately on the arrival of a vessel at any state of the tide and conveyed to St. Pancras Station by express trains running from Tilbury in forty minutes. The same facilities apply to passengers embarking, and there is no reason why, on the completion of the plans, passengers should not commence their ocean voyage in little more than an hour after leaving St. Pancras. This work will mean the provision of what has long been recognised as a crying need—the means of speedy embarkation and landing of passengers for or from American, Canadian, African, and Eastern ports.

Other important improvements to the port are the extension of the Surrey Commercial Docks—now approaching completion—and the new berth for the discharge of meat at the Royal Victoria Docks.

The cost of the new works thus briefly outlined is as follows:

NEW PROGRAMME.

West India and Millwall Docks...	£1,030,000
Tilbury Dock Improvements ...	2,300,000
Tilbury Passenger Landing Stage	376,460

APPROACHING COMPLETION.

Surrey Commercial Docks ...	344,878
Royal Victoria Dock :	
New Berth for Meat Trade ...	144,000
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	£4,195,338

The putting into execution of the various works referred to shows that, after sixteen years of strenuous endeavours to carry out the task imposed upon it—endeavours interrupted and impeded so deplorably first by the war, then

by the succeeding trade depression—the Port of London Authority is alive to-day, as it was at the time of its formation, to the necessity of doing everything possible to maintain the supremacy of the port. The duty with which the successor to the old dock companies was charged was to unify, reorganise, and modernise the old docks, secure the development of the tidal portion of the Thames, and preserve and administer the port. The whole organisation and the facilities of the port had, in short, to be brought into line with modern requirements; and in the carrying out of that apparently bewildering undertaking Viscount Devonport has played the leading rôle. He would probably find it difficult to reply if asked to indicate the outstanding achievements of the body which he has ruled since its inception, so numerous have been its important works, divided, too, as they are into such a variety of categories.

"SINKING BARS OF GOLD."

Vast extensions at the London, the West India, the Millwall, the Royal Victoria and Albert, and the Tilbury Docks, the opening of the magnificent George V. Dock, the construction of enormous warehouses and cold stores, the addition of miles of additional quays—these are some of the achievements of the Authority which is now bidding farewell to the chairman who has made its operations and advancement almost his sole occupation. Perhaps the most important work that has been accomplished has been the least spectacular; it is impossible, for instance, to gain an accurate impression of the stupendous nature of the task of widening and deepening the navigable channels in the river—that incessant dredging which, costing the Authority, as it has, something like £2,500,000 (including plant), Lord Devonport himself once likened to the sinking of bars of gold into the stream, but which is a fundamentally necessary investment to ensure a commercial return. The justification for all this costly scoping of the river bed and the refusal to be satisfied with existing dock facilities is eloquently shown in the annual increases in the shipping using the port; the tonnage for 1923 was 41,215,062, against 38,215,062 for the preceding year, while the value of the total imports and exports for 1923 was £579,165,445, as compared with £564,333,772 in 1922.

There is nothing more amazing than the ignorance of the Londoner regarding his docks. He has seen, or heard of, the wonders of the shipping of Liverpool, of New York, of Hamburg, of Antwerp, of Rotterdam, but he seems to be unaware that all are eclipsed by the port of his own metropolis. A tour of its docks or of its miles of quays, an introduction to, say, the gigantic cold store at the Royal Albert Dock, capable of holding 646,000 carcasses of mutton, to the Central Granary at the Millwall Dock, or to the tobacco warehouse at the Royal Victoria Dock, would be a revelation indeed, as also would be the spectacle of the host of casks of wine laid out for gauging at the London Dock. And if the Londoner wishes, without visiting any of these wonders, to see a symbol of the greatness of the Authority which governs this biggest of all ports, let him go and gaze on its headquarters on Tower Hill, that wonderful edifice which dominates all surrounding it in a wide area.

This is the supremely important body of which, after sixteen years of unremitting service, Viscount Devonport is now yielding up the control. As already stated, the members of the Authority are to-day entertaining their retiring chairman; and they and succeeding generations occupying their seats will always be reminded, if such reminder were necessary, of his devotion to the port by a portrait, now being painted by Mr. P. A. de Laszlo, which is to be hung in the board room.

GREEK REFUGEES.

BRITISH FUND TO STOP WORK.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

ATHENS, Monday.

The decision of the British "Save the Children Fund" to stop work in the Athens and Piræus districts has created great consternation amongst thousands of destitute refugees who during the last two years have received most valuable help from this excellent organisation through its branch in Greece under Dr. Kennedy. It is hoped that the decision will be reconsidered, as 47,000 children and women will remain without any assistance.

BRITISH M.P.'S & POLAND

WARSAW, Monday.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs announces that a group of British members of Parliament have accepted an invitation to spend a week in Poland. The party are expected to arrive at the end of May. A special committee repre-

that a group of British members of Parliament have accepted an invitation to spend a week in Poland. The party are expected to arrive at the end of May. A special committee representative of all classes of society will be formed to attend to the needs of the visitors.—*Reuter.*

OBITUARY.

DR. RUDOLF STEINER.

BERNE, Monday.—The death occurred this morning, at Dornach, of Dr. Rudolf Steiner, the noted writer on philosophical subjects, at the age of 64.—*Reuter.*

Dr. Steiner, an Austrian by birth, was well known, particularly in the Germanic countries, as the founder of the system of philosophy known as Anthroposophy, a curious blend of the mystical and the practical. It was announced as a living token of the fact that humanity is ripe for a renewed knowledge of the spiritual worlds. It is a science based not only on the observation of man's senses and his intellectual thought, but also on the higher faculties of knowledge kindled in him by spiritual training and true initiation. The Anthroposophical Society seeks to establish the spiritual life of the individual and the community on the basis of a true understanding of spiritual and physical evolution. The latter is encouraged by eurhythmy, or the art of movement, the former by the spiritual practices of the East.

The headquarters of the movement are at Dornach, near Basle, where he erected "The Goetheanum," a building unique in its architecture and decoration, and intended to express his aesthetic theories, where he held congresses and classes. The work by which he was best known in England was "The Threefold State," in which he indicated the necessity of economic and industrial life on the one hand, and spiritual and educational life on the other becoming free and independent of the political in modern communities.

In his book, "How to Attain Knowledge of Higher Worlds," he explains his belief that vision of the world beyond can be reached by the Yoga method of meditation, concentration, and clairvoyance. His system is closely related to theosophy, and apparently pointing the way to psychic and spiritual development, has made forcible appeal.

His work in natural science was, roughly, a continuation of Goethe's study of nature in the light of subsequent discovery in research, and he held that in scientific methods there must be a more intuitive and artistic form of reception. Dr. Steiner's theories on education postulated three main stages in the physical and spiritual development of the child—from birth to the change of teeth, from the change of teeth to the age of puberty, and adolescence. In the first two stages all education should be on artistic lines, and the introduction of intellectual methods delayed. The first stage is essentially one of imitation, when the child not only learns but develops physically through the beauty, goodness, and truthfulness of what happens around him, more especially the speech, action, and gesture of his elders. The second stage is that of hero-worship, in which the child has an inner need to look up to grown-up people as authorities. For the third stage Dr. Steiner maintained the principle of co-education. Dr. Steiner had a large following on the Continent, and on his visits to this country his lectures were very widely attended.

COLONEL T. HOPE.

The death is announced at the age of 77, of Colonel Thomas Hope, of Summerhill, near Dumfries, a grandson of the fifth Earl of Selkirk. Colonel Hope represented Linlithgowshire as a Conservative from 1893 to 1895. He was Convener of the County for a quarter of a century, and was a Deputy Lieutenant. Colonel Hope served in India with the Indian Cavalry, and on returning home commanded the Linlithgowshire Volunteers. He married, in 1909, Mary Louisa, daughter of General H. A. Brown, Indian Army, and widow of Colonel W. G. Cumming.

MR. S. C. BOSANQUET.

Mr. Samuel Courthope Bosanquet, of Dingeston Court, Monmouthshire, has died at Pau, South of France, aged 93. At one time he took a prominent part in public work in Monmouth and Wales. His two sons, Mr. S. R. C. Bosanquet, K.C., and Mr. P. Vyvyan Bosanquet, Consul at Frankfort, and his daughter, were with him when he passed away.

PROFESSOR PARTSCH.

Our Geneva Correspondent telegraphs: Dr. Joseph Partsch, Professor of Law at Berlin University, who acted as representative at the German-Belgian Arbitral Tribunal in Paris, died at Geneva yesterday morning, aged 43. Dr. Partsch was a lecturer at Geneva University when he was only 23 years of age, and was considered one of the most brilliant of German jurists.