

MELVILLE DOUGLAS MACKENZIE (1889-1972). C.M.G., M.B., B.S. (Lond.), M.D. (Lond.), D.T.M., D.T.H. (Cantab.), D.P.H. (Durham). - Chairman of the Executive Board and Director of Epidemiology, the Ministry of Health.

"He learned to play the pipes from a night watchman at Euston Station and was often to be seen pacing the streets of north London playing stirring Scottish marches."

British Medical Journal (1973).

Melville MacKenzie (1889-1972) [Epsom College 1904-1907] was the son of Dr Frederick Lumsden MacKenzie, M.D., a practitioner at Huddersfield. He passed out top in the 1st M.B. examination in 1907 and was awarded an Entrance Scholarship to St Bartholomew's Hospital where he graduated M.B., B.S. in 1911. In 1916 he was released for war service as a Captain in the R.A.M.C. He was posted to Mesopotamia where he encountered cholera, plague and typhus, and was mentioned in dispatches for his work in controlling these epidemics. After the war he took diplomas in public health and tropical medicine, and proceeded M.D. (Lond.) (1920). He then became assistant port health officer at Liverpool, but gave up this appointment in 1921 to join a unit in the Volga Valley as a senior medical officer with the Nansen Russian Famine Relief Administration, being primarily engaged in the control of typhus. In 1926 he joined the Ministry of Health and in 1928, he was invited to join the Health Organisation of the League of Nations and took part in advisory missions to Greece, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and many other countries to help with problems such as dengue fever, congenital syphilis, and malaria. From 1931-1933 he went as Special Commissioner of the Council of the League of Nations, to pacify and disarm native tribes - the Kru (Kroo) peoples - and fix new boundaries in Liberia. In 1936 he was appointed Acting Director of the Epidemiological Bureau of the League of Nations in Singapore, and visited Bangkok to advise on control of a cholera epidemic. Early in 1939 he returned to the Far East as special commissioner to co-ordinate the technical assistance given to China. He was at Chungking at the height of the bombing in the Sino-Japanese war and also made a hazardous journey along the Burma Road, living in primitive conditions.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1940, he returned to London from Geneva and became principal medical officer in charge of the London area. Towards the end of the war he returned to international health as Chairman of the European Health Committee of UNRRA and, in 1946, was United Kingdom Delegate with Plenipotentiary Powers, to the World Health Conference in New York. At this time he was the author of *Medical Relief in Europe* (1944), for a series on postwar medical problems, and this proved to be the standard textbook for relief workers. He pointed out that in the aftermath of the last war more people died from preventable diseases and starvation than were killed in the war itself. Before the war there was a very effective system of notifying major epidemic disease from every country in the world, and he called for the reconstitution of this inter-Government information service. In 1947 he was appointed C.M.G. Melville MacKenzie was the chief United Kingdom delegate to the first six assemblies of the World Health Organisation and Chairman of its Executive Board in 1953-1954. While at the Ministry of Health in 1954 he visited Trinidad to advise on an outbreak of poliomyelitis, and later visited the Trucial States to advise on public health and hospitals. His last assignment, just after retirement, was to the earthquake area of Agadir, Morocco. In retirement he was an ardent hill walker and passed many happy hours in London exploring the by-ways of the City.

