

OBITUARY

LORD SALTER

P.C., G.B.E., K.C.B.

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Salter, P.C., G.B.E., K.C.B., died at the age of 94 on the 27th June, 1975. He became President of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq in the year 1955 after the death of the Rt. Hon. L. S. Amery, C.H., and held office continually for ten years until 1965 when he had attained the age of 80 and felt that the succession should go to a younger man, although he himself remained vigorous and active until the age of 90.

Arthur Salter was among the most distinguished of our Presidents; his acceptance of the office gave the School prestige and coincided with fruitful years of development and achievements in the field. He was induced to take an active interest in the School following a visit to Baghdad in 1954 after he had been invited with the approval of Nuri Pasha to advise on the distribution and expenditure of Iraq's vast oil revenue on behalf of the Development Board. In a remarkably short space of time, perhaps amounting to no more than about six months he had written a book 252 pages in length giving his main recommendations concerning Administration, Agriculture, Communications, Drainage, Education, Finance, Health, Housing, Industry, Inflation, Labour, Materials, Miri Serf, New Settlement, Programming, Water, as they were listed chapter by chapter. The book was a clear-headed and important historical analysis of the state of Iraq's economy at the time, and no one was better fitted to advise on a proper course for the future. It was indeed a disappointment that the report itself was pigeon-holed, but there can be no doubt that his analysis made an impact and was not without results. This work is still worth consulting and should not be forgotten.

Arthur Salter was a lively and a vigorous President who gave encouragement to all those who served under him. From his extraordinary talents one might have expected a more flamboyant personality, but he achieved results in a quiet and unobtrusive manner and one thought of him as a little wizard. He was a man who commanded respect and attention, forthright and forceful when he came to express his opinions in public. He had had the ear and attention of Lloyd George for whom he had an unfeigned admiration. He was perhaps not the best judge of men, whom he was apt to judge by the vigour of their attainments rather than by a penetration of their inner character. He himself, brought up as a Gladstonian Liberal, rose beyond political partisanship, and was one of the last of the University representatives in Parliament. He enjoyed international standing as a great European, both as an economist and as an administrator, and served at Geneva as Director of the Economic and Financial section of the League of Nations.

He was Gladstone Professor of Political Theory and Institutions and his Chair was at All Souls College, Oxford, to which he had a life long devotion. His ambition was that his fellow academics should so far as possible serve the State and apply their abilities to public service. In this he was sometimes disappointed, and had little use for "lotus eaters" who were content, as he thought, to produce little and to procrastinate in their research.

Himself an exceptionally quick writer, he produced many books, rapidly and lucidly written. Most entertaining were his memoirs, which recorded him as a scion of Salters, the celebrated boat and punt builders of Oxford.

He took a particular interest in the excavations conducted by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and was proud of his presentation copy of *Nimrud and its Remains*, the first issue of which we publicly gave to him on retirement.

During the years of his vigour he and his American wife, Ethel, entertained widely at their spacious house in Glebe Place, and once a year enjoyed a large and distinguished gathering of his friends, political and academic. This country has a need of such men today and a dearth of them. He was a dear and loyal friend who will be sadly missed by an older generation. His wife was a loyal and devoted partner and gently mocked him when he would not do as she wished. Both were regular in attendance at the Annual General Meetings and lectures and graced many a memorable occasion when the School was presenting the results of its successful activities.

M. M.