

Sir William Leslie Mackenzie, M.A., M.D., LL.D.

WILLIAM LESLIE MACKENZIE was born in Ross-shire and educated mainly at the University of Aberdeen, where he studied the classics, philosophy, and medicine, graduated M.A., M.B., C.M., and M.D. with Honours, and qualified as D.P.H.

After preliminary terms of service in Galloway and Leith he was appointed Medical Inspector under the Local Government Board for Scotland. In 1904 he was promoted to the major position of Medical Member. In 1919, on a rearrangement of offices, he joined the Scottish Board of Health. He retired from the Civil Service in 1928, but in his retirement still kept touch with his lifelong interests. He visited the State of Kentucky to inaugurate there a frontier nursing service on the Scottish model. He remained the Crown nominee for Scotland on the General Medical Council till his death on February 28, 1935.

While much of Mackenzie's administrative work was carried on under the self-denying anonymity observed by state officials, his name can be directly associated with a number of *Reports* and *Proceedings* which were the precursors of health legislation previously unexampled in Scotland. The evidence which he gave, with Dr Matthew Hay, before the Royal Commission on Physical Training, his report on Scottish Mothers and Children, his revelation of the forlorn condition of the Highlands and Islands, and his work as a member of the Committee on Tuberculosis were all instrumental in promoting statutory and other remedial measures. In his own view his membership of the Royal Commission on Housing was his most valuable effort in the cause of public health.

He brought to his duties as a public official acute and original powers of mind, already exercised, as above indicated, in the traditional culture of his native land. His philosophy became to him a compelling force, justifying his innate humanity and stimulating his will to action for the welfare of the people. When his major period of public service began, health activities in Scotland were chiefly environmental in outlook. When it ended, policy was being strongly guided, under the promptings of the national conscience, along the path of social service.

Mackenzie, if not the sole creator—for others also rendered valuable aid—was the inspiration of the new régime thus brought into being. Alike by his convincing disclosures of existing health deficiencies, his

lucid and fervent understanding of their threat to the future of the race, and his administrative rôle in devising the remedies, he made his pervasive influence felt almost at every turn, and may without any stressing of the term be fitly ranked, in his own demesne, among the makers of modern Scotland.

He received his knighthood in 1919. He was LL.D. of Aberdeen (1912), and an honorary medallist of the University of Brussels.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1904.

J. R. C.