

Obituary

Willis Thomas Goodwin Airey

On 20 September 1968 Willis Airey died after a long period of indifferent health borne with courage and equanimity. At the time of his death he was still a teaching member of the history staff at the University of Auckland. This was apt. It was as Professor Airey and his colleagues would have had it, for there were few members of the staff whom he had not at some time taught during his long period of service at Auckland.

He had many talents. But considerable though his influence was in many fields, Willis Airey made his most permanent contribution in the lecture room and the seminar. In small intimate groups he was at his most effective. Only problems counted, and subject barriers would disappear because irrelevant. An excerpt from a poem would be drawn upon, and convincingly, as the most cogent evidence. Academic rigour, a sense of the breadth of problems, scrupulous fairness and compassion: those were the contagion to which all his students were exposed. The historian's ideal that 'impartiality is obligatory but neutrality impossible' was never spoken, for Willis was not pompous and never preached. But the ideal was honoured implicitly wherever he lectured and taught.

We have just planned the 1969 lecture programme in Auckland. For the first time in forty years the name Airey is missing. We are conscious of deprivation. Our sympathy goes to a wife and family whose sense of loss will be immeasurably greater.

R. C. J. STONE

Alexander Hare McLintock

With the death of Alexander Hare McLintock, New Zealand history has lost a strong personality and a versatile and prolific writer. It was fitting that his career should be crowned by his editorship of the *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966). This work has won the tribute of constant use from history teachers, few of whom however are aware how much they owe to his fertile resources and massive labours. Dr. McLintock won his first reputation as provincial historian, both with his *History of Otago* (1949) and his editing of the seventeen Otago local histories. He was appointed Parliamentary Historian in 1952, and planned four volumes on New Zealand's constitutional and political history. He completed *Crown Colony Government* in 1958, and at the time of his death his survey of the

Legislative Council was almost ready for printing. Though appointed as historian, Dr. McIntock found himself charged with numerous other projects which indeed made use of his many talents, but rather impeded his own historical research. Beyond all this, 'the Doctor' won a special place for himself in Parliament House, members dropping into his room freely for briefing and a chat.

Alex McIntock was an historian of forthright views. He believed that history is largely compounded of personality and drama, and that the historian should write prose which gives men their full stature and events their true colour. His best work has eloquence equalled by very few New Zealand historians.

W. J. GARDNER

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