

Obituary Notice

DR. HERMAN SHAW

Members of the Society will have heard with sorrow and surprise of the untimely death of Dr. Herman Shaw on 4th May, 1950, at the age of 58 years.

As Director of the Science Museum, London, his interest in the Society had taken the very practical form of permitting the Museum to be used as its meeting place. But he also took a personal interest in the Society; he was present at the Foundation Meeting, was there elected to serve on the Provisional Committee elected to draw up the Rules and Constitution of the Society, and was subsequently elected a member of the Council of the Society at its first Annual General Meeting on 5th May, 1947.

His interests in the administration of science were pursued with vigour and were far-reaching: he was President of the Museums Association and a Trustee of the Imperial War Museum; a Manager of the Royal Institution and a Member of the General Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; a Member of the Board of Studies of London University and a Governor of the Imperial College of Science and Technology; and a Founder Fellow of the Institute of Physics and Fellow and Honorary Treasurer of the Physical Society.

Among his colleagues and staff he will be remembered with affection for his kindness and accessibility, and for the determination with which he strove to bring the National Collections in his charge into effective display to the public after their wartime eclipse. He first joined the Science Museum staff in 1920 and already in 1921 the acquisition by the museum of an Eötvös torsion balance turned his attention to geophysics, in which subject he became recognized as a leading authority. In the years which followed he published many papers on geophysical subjects, and in 1931 the degree of D.Sc. was conferred upon him by London University.

On the completion of the new East Block of the Science Museum, which was formally opened by H.M. King George V in 1928, a considerable expansion occurred in the Science Collections, in the development of which Shaw was very active, and in 1935 he was appointed Keeper of the Department of Physics and Geophysics.

In 1939 air raid precautions in the Museum and arrangements for the evacuation of the museum collections fell upon Shaw, who in 1940 bore the additional burden of acting Director when Col. E. E. B. Mackintosh was called away for military duties. When the latter retired in 1945 Shaw succeeded him as Director and set himself to the task of restoring the Science Museum to its former place in the life of the country, and it is cause for sorrow that he was to be denied the satisfaction of watching the museum expand into the new Centre Block, part of which is now being built.

Dr. Shaw was born on 14th October, 1891, the only son of the late Mr. G. H. Shaw of Huddersfield. He was educated at Bradford Grammar School, and at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, which he entered in 1911 as a Royal Scholar. In 1913 he won an Aeronautics Research Scholarship at the Imperial College. In World War I he became a Lieutenant in the R.N.V.R. in 1915, a Flight Lieutenant in the R.N.A.S. in 1916, and a Captain in the R.F.C. in 1917.

In 1919 he married Constance, eldest daughter of Mr. F. Shaw of Harrow. They had one son, who died in 1946.

D. CHILTON.