

## OBITUARY

Mr A. R. Melville, CB, CMG

MR A. R. MELVILLE, CB, CMG, who died on 8 December 1982 at the age of 70, had played an important role in the world of tropical agriculture, initially in Africa, but later in the wider international sphere.

After obtaining a degree in Agriculture, with honours in Zoology, at Edinburgh he undertook postgraduate work at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad before joining the Colonial Agricultural Service in 1936 as an entomologist in Kenya. He served throughout the war in East Africa and Ethiopia as a malaria control officer in the RAMC, reaching the rank of major. On returning to Kenya he was given the task of establishing and directing the Central Coffee Research Station at Ruiru, where his pioneering work resulted in the introduction of successful control methods for several important pests of coffee. In 1956 he was appointed Chief Agricultural Research Officer and in 1960 became Director of Agriculture. He stayed on in Kenya after independence in 1963 to help the Minister adapt agricultural policy to the changing pattern of land ownership.

A wider field opened to him in 1966 when he was appointed Chief Agricultural Adviser to the Minister of Overseas Development in London. He travelled indefatigably throughout the developing world and played a major role in gaining the confidence of ministers and agricultural professionals and orienting development assistance to practical goals. In 1971 he was made chief Natural Resources Adviser with the task of co-ordinating the work of a multi-disciplinary team of more than twenty specialists in the whole range of professions concerned with renewable natural resources. He was also prominent in the international field, representing Britain at FAO and playing a significant part in the creation of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. In this context he served from its inception on the Board of Trustees of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics at Hyderabad, India.

He retired from the Ministry in 1976 but remained as active as ever: as a consultant to the World Bank and the International Service for National Agricultural Research, a member of the Board of the Commonwealth Development Corporation, a member of the Editorial Board of *Experimental Agriculture* (which he joined in 1975) and President of the British Tropical Agriculture Association. Shortly before his death he had carried out an arduous mission to Zambia.

Melville was a man of immense vigour and directness, admired and warmly liked by all with whom he came in contact. Even when considering issues in basic science his thoughts were always with the poor farmer in harsh environments. Relevance and practicality were his guiding principles.

His wife Terry pre-deceased him. He leaves two daughters and a grandson.