



LEFT: Professor Rutherford uses a tape-recorder to dictate a section of the biography

alert mind, receptive to the ideas of others, yet fundamentally independent and original. He grasped essentials quickly, made decisions promptly, and carried them out fearlessly and with enormous drive. His fund of energy was phenomenal; his devotion to his task complete and sincere. Yet there was one thing Grey could never be." Professor Rutherford went on, "an obedient, subordinate officer. He was successful in his first Governorship of New Zealand because the British Government let him have all his own way, in spite of the fact that the majority of colonists disliked him. In South Africa the position was different. His policy had the support of the colonists, but his refusal to accept direction from London brought down upon him

from the time he first explored, and the contributions he made to knowledge in several branches of science were both notable and original. Grey was a pioneer student of Maori language, customs and legend. He was an educationist and philanthropist, making large benefactions to the colonies he served out of his private fortune. At his death he left an estate worth only £800.

Perhaps sufficient has been said here not only to show what a notable place Grey holds in British colonial history, but also to indicate how essential is



LADY GREY

Not a happy reconciliation

GREY THE ENIGMA

Sir George Grey has been much written about, but not yet satisfactorily explained. He remains what he was in his lifetime, a fascinating enigma. The task of his biographer is not an easy one.

NO one should understand the full significance of these words now better than Professor J. Rutherford, M.A., Ph.D., who wrote them. They are quoted from an address he gave in 1952 to the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, and at that time Dr. Rutherford, Professor of History at Auckland University College, had been working on a biography of Grey for more than six years. The work is still not complete. Next week, however, listeners will have the opportunity of hearing from Professor Rutherford the first of six talks dealing with episodes in Grey's career during his first Governorship in New Zealand (1845-1853). It will be broadcast by 1YC at 8.0 p.m. on Thursday, May 10, and the other talks will be broadcast on succeeding Thursdays. The other YC stations will take the series during the quarter beginning in August.

When *The Listener* interviewed Professor Rutherford last week he explained some of the difficulties that make a biography of Grey such a vast undertaking. "His political career as an administrator extends over Western and South Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and back to New Zealand again. The archives and source material are scattered all over the world, and that is one reason why no adequate biography has yet been written: Existing studies leave a lot to be desired," Professor Rutherford said. His own researches involved much study of all the available source material in New Zealand. Then, in 1951, he worked for three months in Natal and with the Union of South Africa Archives in Capetown. In England he consulted the

British Museum Library, the archives in the Public Records Office and the Library of the Institute of Historical Research. In 1952 Professor Rutherford studied original source material in Sydney and Adelaide. He is now finishing his research work and hopes that his biography will be ready for the publisher in two years' time.

Grey is one of the outstanding colonial Governors of the 19th century. His career straddles three of the southern Dominions, and covers the reign of Queen Victoria. He was despatched from Portsmouth to Western Australia in 1837, a few days before the Queen's coronation; he retired in 1894, and died at the age of 86 in 1898, three years before the Queen's death. He was a soldier like his father—a colonel who was killed in the Peninsular War of 1812. His military training was at Sandhurst, and he was appointed captain of the Eighty-third Regiment. But it was work as an explorer for the Royal Geographical Society and the Colonial Office that led to his administrative career. His success in dealing with native peoples in the colonies made him a man marked for advancement. It is, therefore, not surprising that when the New Zealand colonists feared in 1845 annihilation by the Maori, Grey was sent to restore good relations. He gave the settlers security and found a temporary solution to the difficulties of purchasing land. Under his guidance agriculture flourished and the colony became prosperous. But his greatest achievement lay with the Maori, over whom his personal influence was immense. Lastly, he was the author of the 1852 Constitution Act, the document on which our present Parliamentary constitution is based.

But, as Professor Rutherford points out, a narrative of Grey's career does not explain the man, and it is his character that has remained a paradox. "That he was one of the ablest Governors of the century is scarcely disputable. He had an exceptionally quick and

censure (which he took very badly) and, eventually, his recall.

"Grey was a radical autocrat—unorthodox, with very liberal ideas. He always wanted his own way, and generally preferred to do things himself. He made few friends and a lot of enemies, in spite of his generosity and his humanity. He was handsome, courteous, persuasive in conversation, speech and writing; and he could be almost irresistible in his charm and self-assurance. Yet, when his feelings were wounded he could be hurt and angry, perverse and dangerous. And he became more frustrated as his career progressed, so that at times he reached a nervous state bordering on hysteria.

"Grey's declining years were clouded in gloom," said Professor Rutherford. "His second Governorship of New Zealand was a failure. He found himself unable to cope with the Maori, who no longer trusted him, and his personality was such that his Ministers found him impossible to work with. His Premiership in the seventies was equally barren, and he retired to the botanical paradise he had created at Kawau Island. Finally he returned to England, not to be happily reconciled with his wife, as earlier historians have claimed, but to die a disappointed man."

Professor Rutherford, who has delved so minutely into Grey's personality, places great emphasis on the breadth of his interests. He was habitually curious

the need for an accurate reassessment of the man. Professor Rutherford's interest in him extends back over twenty years, and the biography he is writing will bear the marks of meticulous scholarship. Fortunately for his readers (and his listeners, too), history becomes a living thing when it is presented by this quiet-spoken and most modest historian. In his radio talks he will give listeners the opportunity of gaining some insight into the many-sided character of Governor Sir George Grey.



SIR GEORGE GREY

"Censure he took very badly . . ."

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