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CLOSED UNTIL

1978



G.R.



COPY.

Durley House,  
Burbage,  
Nr. Marlborough.

Feb. 10, 46.

Dear Prime Minister,

I have been feeling that the time has come when I ought to give up my office as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary. I am writing accordingly to ask you if you will receive my notice of resignation. I hope that for some years to come I shall still be able, whenever called upon, to sit as a Lord of Appeal and perhaps I may be invited to do other public work, as circumstances may seem to require. But I think the time has come when I should seek relief from regular service.

Will you please let me know if you are prepared to accept my resignation?

Yours sincerely,

(SD.) WRIGHT.

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

*April, 1947*  
~~10th January, 1946.~~



COPY

St. Hunt

House of Lords,

S.W.1.

19.2.47.

My dear Wright,

I acknowledge your letter  
with very mixed feelings.

No man has rendered greater  
service to the Law amongst all my  
contemporaries than you yourself,  
and your friendship for me through-  
out all my ups and downs has always  
proved constant.

I rejoice to think that we  
may from time to time be able to  
get your services.

Ever,

Jowitt.

April, 1947

~~10th January, 1946.~~



## Judicial Changes

THE resignation by LORD WRIGHT of his office of Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, announced on 8th April, will be universally regretted. He has held this office since 1932 except for the years 1935 to 1937, when he was Master of the Rolls. His distinguished work as Chairman of the United Nations War Crimes Commission is now part of world history. At the Bar he was considered by many to be the highest living authority on commercial matters. He was called by the Inner Temple in 1900, after six years as a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1917 he took silk, in 1923 he became a Bencher of his Inn, and in 1925 he became a judge of the King's Bench Division. We wish him many happy years of retirement. Mr. Justice MACDERMOTT, of the High Court of Justice, Northern Ireland, has been named as Lord Wright's successor in the House of Lords. The two vacancies in the Court of Appeal caused by the recent promotion of LORD OAKSEY, L.J., and MORTON, L.J., to be Lords of Appeal in Ordinary, are filled by Mr. Justice WROTTESELEY and Mr. Justice EVERSHERD. The former has been a judge of the King's Bench Division since 1937 and the latter a judge of the Chancery Division since 1945. Mr. FRED EILLS PRITCHARD, K.C., has been appointed a judge of the King's Bench Division, and Mr. DAVID LLEWELLYN JENKINS, K.C., a judge of the Chancery Division. Both are below the usual age at which judges are appointed, but this is generally considered nowadays to be a good thing. It will be recalled that Mr. Justice HODSON, Mr. Justice WILLMER, Mr. Justice BYRNE, Mr. Justice WYNN PARRY, Mr. Justice DENNING and Mr. Justice EVERSHERD were under fifty when appointed.

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17 Apr 1947

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day of ~~10~~ April One the  
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late a Lord of Appeal



THE LAW JOURNAL

APRIL 25, 1947

PA →

**Lord Wright Retires**

LORD WRIGHT, after more than twenty years on the Bench, has resigned his office of Lord of Appeal in Ordinary; and he goes into retirement at the age of 78 with the cordial good wishes of the profession. After a distinguished career at the Bar, where for some time he led the Commercial Court, he became a King's Bench Judge in 1925; among the famous cases that he tried whilst a Puisne Judge were the Royal Mail case, in 1931, when Lord Kylsant was charged and convicted in connection with the publication of a prospectus that gave a false impression of the company's position, and that of William Herbert Wallace, who was convicted (against the tenor of the summing up) of murdering his wife, and whose conviction was quashed by the Court of Criminal Appeal. In 1932, Mr. Justice Wright was appointed a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary; in 1935 he gave up that office to become Master of the Rolls, but in 1937 he returned to the House of Lords on reappointment as a Lord of Appeal.

\* \* \*

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947.



THE LONDON GAZETTE, 25 APRIL, 1947

X Crown Office, House of Lords, S.W.1.  
24th April, 1947.

The KING has been pleased by Letters Patent under the Great Seal bearing date the 21st day of April, 1947, to grant to the Right Honourable Lord Wright, late a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, an annuity of £3,750 for life commencing on the 6th day of April, 1947.

MURLEY HOUSE,  
BURBAGE,  
NR. MARLBOROUGH.

*Apr 26. 47.*

*It has duly received,  
Wright for, the  
granting him an*

As the commercial cases which he usually tried were not widely reported in the press, his name was little known to the public. Towards the close of his career as a Judge of the King's Bench Division, however, it fell to him to preside over two of the most remarkable cases of their day—*Banco de Portugal v. Waterlow and Sons, Ltd.*, and the trial of Lord Kylsant. The first of these arose out of a criminal conspiracy of which Waterlows, the well-known printers, were the innocent victims. They were induced to print a large number of notes in the belief that the Bank of Portugal had given authority, and the notes were put into circulation in Portugal. The hearing of the action before Wright occupied 21 days, at the end of 1930, and he gave

and speed with which he performed their duties. For these services he was made a G.C.M.G. in 1948. He was made a Benchler of his Inn in 1923, and elected Treasurer in 1946. For a time Wright was chairman of the committee concerned with law revision, a topic much under discussion at the present time. He had been Deputy High Steward of Cambridge University which conferred on him the degree of Hon. LL.D., as also did the Universities of Birmingham, London, and Toronto. In his younger days Wright had been a mountaineer and was a member of the Alpine Club. He was also a keen horseman, a taste shared by the lady whom he married in 1928, Margery Avis, daughter of F. J. Bullows, of Sutton Coldfield.

*impl 030 (400)*



C.O. 84/41.

THE TIMES MONDAY JUNE 29 1964

## Obituary

### LORD WRIGHT

#### FORMER LORD OF APPEAL

Lord Wright, P.C., G.C.M.G., a former Master of the Rolls and Lord of Appeal, died on Saturday at his home near Marlborough. He was 94.

Robert Alderson Wright's career owed nothing either to birth or to fortune. He was the son of John Wright, Marine Superintendent of South Shields. Born on October 15, 1869, he was educated privately and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and graduated in 1896 with a first class in the Classical Tripos. He was a Fellow of Trinity from 1899 to 1905, and was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1900, in his thirty-second year.

Wright was a pupil of Mr. (afterwards Lord Justice) Scrutton, then at the height of his very large commercial practice. From the close of the last century the Commercial Court had begun to be the stepping-stone to many promotions to the Bench, and, as the leaders passed upwards, first-rate juniors in that branch had great opportunities for advancement. By 1917, the year in which he took silk, Wright had achieved a high position in the confidence of the City firms of commercial solicitors. While the 1914-18 War brought a decline in the ordinary mercantile business of the Courts, the Prize Court was a valuable source of additional profit, and the end of the war brought an aftermath of litigation. From that time onward Wright was in nearly every important commercial case before the Courts, and was frequently briefed before the House of Lords and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Though he had an attractive vein of dry humour, his advocacy, like that of several of his contemporaries in commercial practice, was lugubrious rather than brisk.

When in May, 1925, Mr. Justice Lush resigned, Wright's nomination by Lord Cave, then Lord Chancellor, to fill the vacancy was received by the profession with great satisfaction. He made an excellent Judge, and showed more patience on the Bench than was expected from a somewhat irritable manner, for which perhaps overwork was responsible, occasionally displayed at the Bar. In his earlier days on the Bench he was a Judge of the silent type, but it was noticed that latterly in the House of Lords and Privy Council he developed the habit of maintaining a running commentary on the arguments of counsel.

#### TWO NOTABLE TRIALS

As the commercial cases which he usually tried were not widely reported in the press, his name was little known to the public. Towards the close of his career as a Judge of the King's Bench Division, however, it fell to him to preside over two of the most remarkable cases of their day—*Banco de Portugal v. Waterlow and Sons, Ltd.*, and the trial of Lord Kylsant. The first of these arose out of a criminal conspiracy of which Waterlows, the well-known printers, were the innocent victims. They were induced to print a large number of notes in the belief that the Bank of Portugal had given authority, and the notes were put into circulation in Portugal. The hearing of the action before Wright occupied 21 days, at the end of 1930, and he gave



judgment for the bank for £569,421. In July, 1931, he presided at the trial of Lord Kylsant at the Central Criminal Court on charges of publishing, as chairman of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, false balance-sheets and a false prospectus. On the first charge he was acquitted, but he was convicted on the second and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment. Wright's handling of this intricate case greatly enhanced his already high reputation as a Judge, and on the resignation of Lord Dunedin as a Lord of Appeal, in April, 1932, he was singled out at once among about three Judges as likely to be promoted. His appointment was entirely justified, and at a time when the House of Lords and Privy Council had never been stronger in legal talent his presence added even greater strength to those Courts. His legal path had lain among the type of litigation which comes before the final tribunals, and at the Privy Council his fine mind soon made itself master of the intricacies of Indian litigation.

In 1935 an unusual break occurred in Wright's judicial career. Lord Hanworth, shortly before his death, had resigned the Mastership of the Rolls in October, and at the time the Government was in some difficulty in filling the post satisfactorily. Wright was invited to take it on the understanding that, on the first vacancy arising among the Lords of Appeal, he would be at liberty to resume his former office. The Mastership of the Rolls, with its appanages, at that time the Record Office, as well as the control of solicitors, is recognized as the most onerous of judicial posts, and Wright, who was neither young nor very robust when he assumed it, was understood to feel the strain and was somewhat annoyed that the resignation of one of the Lords of Appeal was delayed beyond its expected time. However, in April 1937, a vacancy occurred, and Wright, to his great satisfaction, resumed his former duties as a Lord of Appeal which he carried out until his resignation in 1947.

#### WAR CRIMES COMMISSION

In February, 1945, he was elected chairman of the United Nations War Crimes Commission. The object of this commission was the collection of material on which the charges subsequently investigated at the trials at Nuremberg were based. During their inquiries the members of the commission visited Germany and inspected the camps where the worst crimes had been perpetrated. Later, at the invitation of the Australian Government, Lord Wright went by air to Japan to attend the trials of the war criminals there. He also visited Washington for consultation with the American authorities. It was generally agreed that the work of the Nuremberg Tribunal was greatly facilitated by the care and speed with which the commission had performed their duties. For these services he was made a G.C.M.G. in 1948.

He was made a Bencher of his Inn in 1923, and elected Treasurer in 1946. For a time Wright was chairman of the committee concerned with law revision, a topic much under discussion at the present time. He had been Deputy High Steward of Cambridge University which conferred on him the degree of Hon. LL.D., as also did the Universities of Birmingham, London, and Toronto.

In his younger days Wright had been a mountaineer and was a member of the Alpine Club. He was also a keen horseman, a taste shared by the lady whom he married in 1928, Margery Avis, daughter of F. J. Bullows, of Sutton Coldfield.



C.O. 84

41

Crown Office Warrants & Patents

PENSION

The Rt Hon. Lord Wright



ref. 6 April 1947

CROWN OFFICE PROCEDURE

DOCUMENT PENSION: Lord Wright Lord of Appeal in Ordinary

Fee £ : : Date 1947 April 3

Instructions received from P.M.

Wrote for Fee

Fee received

Warrant sent to The Chancellor of State

Warrant signed and received

Copy of Warrant sent to Serjeant

Letters Patent engrossed on small large loan By the Chancellor of State

Letters Patent dated 21st and 21st sealed

Writ prepared dated and sealed

Letters Patent sent to Lord Wright

Gazette Notice sent

Warrant sent to L.C. for "recept"

Warrant returned

INFORMED:

Chancery  
Treasury

RECORDS

Docquet Book. ✓  
Presentations Docquet Book  
Entry Council List.  
Card Index. ✓  
General Election List.  
Assignments ✓

Other Books  
Proceedings

70631-1 250 D/d 134 3/46

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947  
10th January, 1946.



JOHN CLARKE MACDERMOTT one of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Northern Ireland to be a LORD OF APPEAL in the House of Lords  
MACDERMOTT of Belmont in Our City of Belfast  
long as he shall well behave himself  
the said Act mentioned with all wages  
whatsoever to the said Office belonging  
hold the said style of Baron MacDermott  
MacDermott during his life  
Witness my hand and seal at London this 10th day of December 1946

HOUSE OF LORDS,  
S.W.1  
TEL.: WHITEHALL 6240  
In any reply  
please quote No.

RIGHT  
HOUSE,  
BURBAGE,  
NR. MARLBOROUGH.  
Dec 22-46.

Mr. Arthur Napier to see this  
correspondence.  
30.xii.46

Same thanks. April 5th would  
be a good date, if L. Wright is  
prepared to work regularly till then.  
Wootsley will be in circuit till  
then.  
By then it will be clear whether  
Byrne J. can be transferred to K.B.  
without being replaced in P.D.A.  
because the new Justice system will  
have been working for a while then,  
to the extent to which it relieves the  
Judges will be clear.

The Lord Chancellor has  
written to Lord Wright & asked him  
if he will continue until April 5th, 1947.

31.xii.46.

Will your  
office arrangements be altered  
do for me  
all the season's greetings  
Jm Wright

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947  
10th January, 1946.



Lo. WRIGHT

DURLEY HOUSE,

BURBAGE,

NR. MARLBOROUGH.

Dec 22-46.

Dear Chancellor

I have decided to  
retire from my office as a  
Lord of appeal in ordinary.

I understood that for  
revenue reasons a good date  
for the retirement to take effect  
is either 5 June or 5 April  
next. Would you decide which  
date would best suit your  
office arrangements. I will then  
do for me

all the season's greetings  
Yrs Wright

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947

~~10th January, 1946.~~



would come) - and he's Chancery -  
or Walter Monckton direct from the  
Bar. *on Valentine's Eve*

*do*  
What/you think I ought to  
recommend to the Prime Minister?

Happy Christmas to you.

*See letter sent to Lord Greene*

The Right Honourable  
The Lord Chief Justice of England.

23rd December, 1946.

*Dear Chairman,*  
I should like a few more days to  
answer your letter, but I would like to  
tell you now how warmly I appreciate  
the great service you have rendered to  
us.

Oddly enough I was in some sense  
responsible for your coming to the  
House of Lords. I pressed Ramsay  
Macdonald to make the appointment  
and I am perfectly certain I was right:  
I have been justified a thousand times.  
You have brought a distinction to our  
deliberations which I cannot replace;  
you have radiated good fellowship and  
we have all loved working with you,  
though I fully understand that you  
think the time has come to go. We  
shall miss profoundly our regular  
association and shall seek to mitigate  
it by getting you to help us from time  
to time. You and I have been so  
intimately associated over so very  
many years that I would like to add  
how much I am conscious of the benefit  
I have gained from our friendship.

All good wishes to you both for

*My appreciation is in the future  
of serving under your flag.  
I always wanted to return*

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

*April, 1947*  
~~10th January, 1946.~~



Christmas and the New Year.  
I will write to you again soon.

The Right Honourable  
The Lord Wright.

BURLEY 17.

DURLEY HOUSE,  
BURBAGE,  
NR. MARLBOROUGH.

27 Dec. 46.

Dear Chancellor,

Many thanks for your  
very kind letter, which I appreciate.  
I do regret that I have been  
so short a time under you as  
Chancellor. But there is a time  
for every thing. I have hesitated for  
some months <sup>about</sup> returning home the  
"in Ordinary". But I comforted myself  
by reflecting that "once a Lord  
of Appeal" always a Lord of Appeal"  
+ I look forward to having  
many opportunities in the future  
of serving under your flag.  
I always wanted to return

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947  
~~10th January, 1946.~~



My wife & I are with me in kind regards to the best of New Year wishes to you & family.

before I had ceased to have any life left in me & before I was used up & became a "squeezed lemon" as some one described the last days of Darcy.

Come April 11<sup>th</sup> next it is 15 years since I became a Lord of appeal, after 7 years as a K.B. Judge. So I feel I can take my pension, especially if I can still do something to earn it by holding myself at your disposal as a Lord of appeal, whenever I can be useful.

I remember how kind Harold Macdonald was & I do not forget what I owed him on that occasion.

There is no need to hasten your further answer. I only wanted a date for my change from salary to pension, & some guide about arranging my room in London. But neither matters or needs immediate reply.

TEL. FOREST GREEN 224.

Xmas Day  
THE WILDERNESS,  
HOLMBURY ST MARY,  
NEAR DORKING.

Dear William

My desires would be: -

For H.L. - Geoffrey Lawrence  
for Z.P. - Wrottesley.

As for the other names you mention:

Fisher } would a bit longer  
Gunnell } in the C.A.  
Asquith }

Miss Phipps } I don't think any?  
and the Bar } these would go to  
H.L. direct - except  
Capt Radcliffe but you  
must have a common  
sense to replace Wright.

In fact, I have no second choice to

The Right Honourable  
The Lord Chief Justice of England.

er, 1946.

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er to your

Court,

unto the

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947  
15th January, 1946.



My wife joins with me in kind regards to the best of  
New Year.

in London. But neither matters nor needs  
immediate reply.

31st December, 1946.

Thank you for your letter of  
the 27th December. It was good of  
you to write as you do.

I appreciate your desire to go  
while you are fit and well and I shall  
look forward to seeing you here from  
time to time whenever you are able to  
come and help us.

Now as to the date of your re-  
tirement. You said that either 5th  
January or 5th April would suit you  
equally well. It would be of the  
greatest help to me if you could  
continue to sit regularly until the  
5th April and this will also give  
me time to consider consequential  
appointments. If you will do this  
it would be helpful if you would  
send your notice of resignation to  
the Prime Minister well in advance  
of that date.

The Right Honourable  
The Lord Wright.

Yours sincerely

Thank you very much

Permanent Secretary to the  
Lord Chancellor.

April, 1947  
~~10th January, 1946.~~