

# MONTHLY CIRCULAR,

## SEPTEMBER, 1930

W. P. RICHARDSON.



Born: February 25th, 1875. Died: August 8th, 1930.

*"God will unite the broken chain closer when we meet again."*

**THEY HAVE MET.**

ESTHER RICHARDSON.



Born: June 30th, 1875.

Died: April 3rd, 1927.

*"God will unite the broken chain closer when we meet again."*

**THEY HAVE MET.**

**DEATH**  
**of**  
**WILLIAM PALLISTER RICHARDSON**

General Secretary, Durham Miners' Association  
and  
Treasurer, Miners' Federation of Great Britain.  
A Character Sketch.

W. P. Richardson is dead. It is hard to realise it: it was so sudden and unexpected. His going was as his staying. He rushed through life; he rushed out of it. Restless, impetuous; never tiring in well-doing. Always concerning himself with other people's comfort and happiness, without thinking of his own. There were no things little in life to him. He would hurry along a railway train through carriage after carriage to the kitchen to secure someone a drink of soda water, with the same energy with which he would cross Europe to attend a meeting at which the welfare of miners, internationally, had to be discussed. And everywhere he carried the same genial smile, and hailed everybody in the same cheery way.

As a speaker he had no time for fine phrase and lengthy introductions. He went straight to the point he wanted to make. He had a style all his own, and in a miners' meeting could wield a wonderful power. He never tried to get away from the dialect of Tyneside, irrespective of where he was. He could turn pitmatic terms into poetic gems. He could fight and persuade almost in the same breath. Biting sarcasm would be so mixed with friendly references that offence was seldom felt from what he said. He was ready with apt illustration, and usually got his analogies from the mine, the miner's home, or the life of the miner. Such analogies might be lost on the stranger, but to the mining community their application and significance were at once understood.

He was an ideal husband. His wife was always first in his thoughts, at home or abroad. Wherever he was - away from home - a daily letter was sent to her. When the train in which he was travelling passed his home, just before arriving at Durham Station - if during the day - he waved a white handkerchief, and if during the night, he sent a shrill whistle through his fingers, to let her know that he was there. These things, which some may call

little, sweeten home so much that to souls linked together by love, they are big indeed.

He was an affectionate father. His great ambition was to fit his children so that they would be better armed to fight life's battles than circumstances had ever allowed him to be. For this purpose he endeavoured to secure for them the best education it was possible for him to secure.

In work he was indefatigable. Whatever he did he did with all his might. He possessed great organising ability, and was never so happy as when arranging some project. He loved peace, and avoided strife whenever possible; but could fight when driven to fight. His dislike of conflict sometimes appeared as an inconsistency in his character, when compared with his usual force and energy.

The writer of an "In Memoriam," in *The Miner*, said of him: "If he had one failing as a working-class leader - and his qualities were sufficient to enable this to be said without doing injustice to his memory - it was a certain fluidity; an inclination to temporise, to postpone the taking of an unpalatable decision, to defer action in the hope that circumstances might change, and make that action unnecessary."

But this writer went on to say: "Yet it would be ungenerous - untrue even - to deny that he had reserves of stubborn determination which demonstrated as clearly as his blue-scarred features, his oneness with the men of the mine."

His life was in unity with the life of the miners - he knew no other life! His character was as simple and unaffected as their characters are. Boisterous as they are sometimes boisterous; but like them, always kindly and sympathetic, and ready to assist where assistance was needed.

Away from work, he was a boy again, and entered into amusement or play with all a boy's turbulence. His playfulness, to the more sedate, sometimes became almost disconcerting, and yet no one could resent it: it was done in such a warm-hearted, though turbulent, way.

Farewell, for the present, W. P. I have described you as I knew you; again, farewell.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL**

William Pallister Richardson, known among his friends and acquaintances as W. P., was born at Usworth Colliery, County Durham, on February 25th, 1873. His father was a miner, and lost his life in an explosion

in Usworth Pit on March 2nd, 1885, when 41 lives were lost. It was three weeks after the explosion when his body was recovered. At the end of another three weeks a pony was got out alive—the only creature left alive. One can understand the affection W. P. had for that little horse, when afterwards, as a driver lad, it was his workmate.

His mother was left with a large family, and Willie was the second eldest son, so that he was called on early to augment the family income by his labour. Even when at school he, in the early morning, had to carry newspapers from door to door, for which those for whom he carried them gave him a small remuneration. Five months after his father's death he commenced to work in Usworth Pit as a pony driver. Poor little lad! How he would think of his father when in the same mine where his father was killed. And poor mother! What a trial when she had to send her boy to work in that pit which took from her her husband, where he would have daily to face the same dangers and risk the same death his father had died. But she had no choice. To help "to win the bairns their bite and sup" he had to go.

From a driver he rose to be a putter, and from a putter to a hewer. He very early in his career began to take an interest in the Usworth Branch of the Durham Miners' Association. When only a putter he was appointed putters' average wage taker, and when a very young man he was appointed secretary of the branch. He also became secretary of the Usworth Branch of the Durham Miners' Approved Society, under the National Health Insurance Act. He was, in addition, Compensation Secretary of that branch.

His brother Tom was well-known in the Labour Movement, and was for some time M.P. for Whitehaven, in Cumberland. The first time that Tom had to visit London as a member of a miners' delegation, Willie and his brother-in-law, James Howey, went with him to see the London sights. It was a great event, and made a lasting impression on his memory. It, however, created a desire in his soul to be something, and do something in the world.

In 1912 he became a member of the Durham Miners' Federation Board, and in 1915 he became an agent of the Durham Miners' Association, and acted as Executive Committee Secretary. In July, 1924, after the death of Mr. Thomas Cann, he was appointed General Secretary of the Association.

In 1917 he was one of the Durham members of the Committee of the Federation of Great Britain, and in 1921 was appointed Treasurer of that

Federation - a position which he held up to his death. He was also one of the miners' members of the Miners' National Welfare Committee. He was also for several years a member of the International Miners' Committee, and in that capacity was very frequently on the Continent, at conferences and committee meetings. He also attended many meetings of the League of Nations Labour Organisation, held in Geneva. One of the most important reasons for these meetings between the Miners' Federation officials and the League of Nations was their desire to establish an international arrangement between the coal-producing countries of Europe.

About 28 years ago he was one of a few ardent souls who formed a branch of the I.L.P. at Usworth. It took some courage to do that at that time. He carried on an active propaganda movement, the result of which is seen to-day in the labour majority in the Durham County Council.

For 15 years before he went into the Durham Miners' offices, he was chairman of the Usworth Parish Council.

In parliamentary and municipal elections he usually acted as agent or sub-agent, and went canvassing and distributing Labour literature.

He received his elementary education at Usworth School, the schoolmaster being the late Mr. Walbank, father of Mr. J. A. Walbank, who is now our accountant for our District Wages Board. Between J. A. Walbank and Willie Richardson there has always been a strong bond of friendship. Ties formed as lads together have never been broken.

W. P.'s education did not stop when he, at 12 years of age, had to leave school and go into the pit. He continued to educate himself, and became a great reader of general literature. This helped him largely in the Trade Union and Labour Movements.

The whole Richardson family were ardent Primitive Methodists. When a boy, W. P. played the violin in the village Chapel. Unlike too many public men, he never severed his connection with the work of his church. This also was a great help in his public career. The storms of calumny and misrepresentation sometimes beat upon him, as they so often do on all men and women who endeavour to serve their fellows; but in the strength of his own conscious integrity, and the help of God, in whom he trusted, he remained firm and unmoveable.

On April 25th, 1895, he married Esther Howey, the daughter of the late Thomas Howey, Master's Weighman at Usworth Colliery. She died about three years ago. In my Monthly Circular of April, 1927, I gave a short biographical sketch of her life and labours. W. P. owed much to her. She was a helpmate indeed. She co-operated with him in all his work. The Women's Labour Movement in the County of Durham is the greatest movement of the kind in Great Britain, and probably in the world. That movement owes much to Esther and W. P. Richardson.

Because of their joint work on behalf of labour in general, and especially on behalf of the mining folk, I have united their photos as a frontispiece to this Circular. They were a great example of what two ardent souls can do, working together in all things for the good of others. Neither of them lived to be old but:

"He most lives, who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best."

### **TRIBUTES TO HIS MEMORY**

In a circular issued to the branches of the Durham Miners' Association by the Executive Committee, they said:

"We deeply regret to have to inform you of the death of our respected General Secretary, Mr. W. P. Richardson. It was so unexpected - he was going about his ordinary duties, in apparently normal health, on Friday, but at midnight he had a seizure from which he never recovered.

Mr. Richardson came into the office as a comparatively young man on the death of Mr. John Wilson, and his adaptability to the work of the different departments has been appreciated by all his colleagues and the membership, and he has admirably maintained the best traditions of the offices.

He was painstaking, plodding, and could be trusted to get up in a very presentable manner a case involving intricate details with great satisfaction; in fact, his colleagues and the lodges in the county could entrust to him their work with every confidence.

He has gone with tragic suddenness, and that very responsible position, involving onerous duties, will be very bad to fill. As colleagues, we appreciated his qualities of good comradeship, and feel intensely our loss. We feel

confident this feeling will be shared by every member of the Durham Miners' Association.

Some of us had known him since early manhood, and his close association with every progressive movement in the county which had for its purpose greater liberty for the individual and the amelioration of the conditions of life, especially in the mining industry.

By hard plodding and perseverance he had built up for himself in this county in our general organisation a very creditable position, in which he had been able to wield an influence which had been to the advantage of the county as a whole.

We feel much distressed at the loss the family has sustained. He has left four daughters and a son, and they are left without father and mother, his wife pre-deceasing him three years ago, and we feel sure that every father and mother in the county will fully realise the sad position of these young people.”

**FROM MR. T. RICHARDS, PRESIDENT and MR. A. J. COOK,  
FEDERATION SECRETARY**

The proceedings at the annual conference of the Miners' Federation opened at Weston-Super-Mare under a cloud, in view of the sudden death of Mr. Richardson, who had been treasurer for about six years.

The President, Mr. T. Richards, and the Secretary, Mr. A. J. Cook, issued the following statement:-

“Mr. Richardson's death is not only a great loss to the miners, but at this juncture particularly it is a loss to the mining industry and the public. Mr. Richardson was of a determined temperament, and very anxious to avoid a stoppage in the industry, and had he lived, he would have helped the Federation officials in their great task of working successfully the Coal Act, with which many of the miners are not fully in agreement.

It will be difficult to replace a man of his character. He was much needed at the present moment, because he took the long view and recognised, as do

the other officials, that apart from the question of public ownership, we must resuscitate the coal industry if our members are to secure improvement. This Conference will not elect a successor to Mr. Richardson; that will be left, we feel, to the new Executive to decide.”

### **THOS. RICHARDS AT THE M.F.G.B. ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Speaking of W. P. to a journalist, Mr. Richards said: “To sum up in a sentence his character and achievement, ‘he gave of his best, and he gave it without stint.’ Could any man have anything finer than this for his epitaph?”

Speaking in the Conference, Mr. Richards also said: “He was a strong man. When convinced that his opinions were right he expressed them, perhaps brusquely, perhaps sometimes irritably, but never maliciously. He was a Christian, and had accepted in toto the precept Christ gave to His disciples: ‘Love ye one another, as I have loved you.’

I believe that gospel of love was the secret of his leadership of men: Love for the defenceless, the oppressed and the helpless. That is the gospel of the Trade Union leader, and he had that to the full.”

### **APPRECIATION BY MR. ROBSON**

Mr. James Robson, President of the Association, and secretary of the Durham County Mining Federation Board, speaking on behalf of the officers of the Association, referred to Mr. Richardson’s splendid work and activities in connection with the industrial and political problems that came before the Association during his period as secretary.

“The dependability of his work was highly appreciated by all who came in contact with him,” said Mr. Robson. “He was cautious and careful, yet had quickness and willpower to measure the psychological moment in any difficulty we were in, and in the very trying circumstances through which the Association has passed he could always be relied upon to take a line that was safe and cautious, and in the best interests of the membership?”

### **BY W. WHITELEY, M.P. FOR BLAYDON**

“The death of my colleague and personal friend came as a tremendous shock. He and I have been very closely associated since 1911, and in many ways he was most helpful to me in my public work. He was a real enthusiast for the cause of the workers, and particularly the miners.



He never spared himself in any sense in looking after their welfare. He was a man who could never take things quietly - he always had to enter into his work in the most enthusiastic manner, and possibly did himself a good deal of harm by not easing up a little in the last few years.

He was one whose friendship was worthwhile, but at a comparatively early age he has passed away, and all those who were closely connected with him will feel a great loss. He has rendered a most useful public service during the course of his life, and his has been a life well spent. The miners of the county will ever remember him as a faithful servant”

**FROM MR. FRED. TOPHAM, SECRETARY,  
SUNDERLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY**

“When I heard Mr. ‘Will’ Richardson, the Durham Miners’ Secretary, at the Miners’ Gala a fortnight ago, I little thought that would be the last time I should see him and hear him.

His death brings back a flood of memories of well-known colleagues, and especially of his brother, Tom, who died two years ago. They were, in many ways, representatives of the best type of Durham Miners.

A well-known M.P. in Yorkshire once said to me: ‘What fine men you have sent from the Northumberland and Durham coalfields - Burt, Wilson, Fenwick, Straker, Johnson, and many others.’ I had the privilege of knowing them all well, and strangely enough, all of them were associated with us, in their early days, in the Temperance movement.

It is most significant that the men selected to lead the miners are all abstainers, however heavy the average miner may drink when he has the means to get his liquor. Happily, there are capable young men available in the Durham Miners’ Association to fill his place.”

**COAL-OWNERS’ APPRECIATION**

Mr Ridley Warham, vice-chairman, Northumberland Coal-owners’ Association, said: “Mr. Richardson’s death will be deeply regretted by coal-owners and miners alike. He was a great champion of the workers, and one realises that he will be a great loss to the miners of Durham, and of the country as a whole. He was a man for whom I had the greatest respect, and my personal relations with him were always extremely pleasant.”

'There were many other fine tributes sent to the Durham Miners' Association, and to Mr. Richardson's bereaved family, for which I have no space.

### **A GREAT SHOCK**

The delegates to the M.F.G.B. Annual Conference, held at Weston-Super-Mare, were on the Newcastle Central Station platform on the Saturday morning when they learned of the sudden death of W. P. Richardson on the previous evening. The news came as a terrible shock. We were expecting him to join our train (8 a.m. from Newcastle) at Durham. On the Sunday, August 10th, I sent the following letter to Mr. Robson :-

Paragon Lodge,  
Paragon Road,  
Weston -Super-Mare.  
*10th August, 1930.*

Dear Mr. Robson,

It came as a terrible shock to the Northumberland delegation to the M.F.G.B. Annual Conference when on the platform of the Central Station, Newcastle-on-Tyne, we learned of the death of Mr. W. P. Richardson.

I was requested by my colleagues to write this letter of condolence and sympathy with the Durham Miners' Association, and with Mr. Richardson's family, on the great loss sustained by his death.

Let me also say that I know the whole of the Northumberland Miners' Association will share with me in this expression of our sorrow.

The Miners' Federation, too, will feel it keenly. It will cast a gloom over this week's proceedings.

Personally, I have lost a dear friend, when friends with me are becoming fewer. Mrs. Straker, who is with me, desires also to express her sorrow and sympathy with you all.

I am, yours very sincerely,  
WM. STRAKER, Secretary.

J. Robson, Esq.,  
Durham Miners' Association,  
Durham.

## **THE FUNERAL**

I am indebted to the Durham County Chronicle for the following excellent account of the funeral.

### **TRIBUTES TO A GREAT MINERS' LEADER**

#### **MR. A. J. COOK'S CALL TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

##### **THE LATE MR. RICHARDSON**

The Annual Conference of the Miners' Federation at Weston-Super-Mare was postponed on Tuesday out of respect to the memory of their treasurer (Mr. W. P. Richardson), whose remains were interred in St. Margaret's Cemetery, Durham, on that day.

Mr. A. J. Cook and several of his colleagues travelled overnight in order to pay their last tribute to the memory of one who held such an honoured place in the Federation.

English, Scottish and Welsh coalfields were represented in the great assembly of mourners at the graveside. Glowing tributes to the worth and work of the Durham miners' leader were paid by the Rev. G. B. Richardson, of Gateshead (formerly superintendent minister in the Durham Circuit), by Mr. Peter Lee, Executive Committee Secretary and a loyal colleague; and by Mr. A. J. Cook,

Secretary of the Miners' Federation.

### **STRIKING EULOGIES**

#### **MR. RICHARDSON'S SOLACE IN RELIGION**

The funeral was a striking tribute to the memory of a man who had given himself, heart and soul, to the welfare of the people among whom he had lived and moved during a long and honourable life. W. P. Richardson was an honoured figure in trade union circles throughout Great Britain, and was known and respected in international affairs.

Mourners from all parts of the kingdom followed his remains to the Jubilee Primitive Methodist Church, where he was a regular worshipper, and afterwards to St. Margaret's Cemetery. The coffin was lowered into a grave on the brow of the hill, where there lie the remains of many of the great figures of the Durham Miners' Association, and of Mr. Richardson's revered wife, who passed on some three years ago.

All along the route of the procession people thronged the footpaths in order to catch a glimpse of the coffin containing the remains of the dead leader. It

was an impressive spectacle and was in itself a great tribute to a man who had played his part so valiantly in the cause of the worker.

### **ORDER OF THE PROCESSION**

His immediate colleagues in the Durham Miners' Association walked at the head of the procession, and they were followed by the members of the Executive Committee and the County Mining Federation Board. Then came the clerical staffs of the Association, representatives of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, of other coalfields, county Members of Parliament, the political agents of the Durham Miners' Association, the solicitors, the chartered accountant and auditor, the Approved Society Committee, members of the committee of the Aged Mineworkers' Homes, representatives of the Permanent Relief Fund, and of the Coal-owners' Association.

Then came the hearse, the members of the family, personal friends, delegates from the miners' lodges of the county and co-operative societies, and the general public. Every lodge in the county was represented.

### **THE FAMILY**

The family mourners were: Mr. and Mrs. A. Robson, Sunderland, son-in-law and daughter; Miss Ena Richardson, Miss Ettie Richardson, and Miss Margaret Richardson, daughters: Mr. William P. Richardson, son: Mr. and Mrs. Gaunt, Washington, brother-in-law and sister: Mrs. Middleton, Washington, sister; Mrs. Sarah Richardson, Washington, sister-in-law.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Richardson, Washington, brother and sister-in-law: Mr. and Mrs. John Richardson, Washington, brother and sister-in-law: Mrs. Howey, Coxlodge, sister-in-law: Mr. and Mrs. J. Howey, Washington, brother-in-law and sister-in-law: Mrs. J. Pallister, Wideopen.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Gaunt and Mr. and Mrs. G. Davies, Newcastle; Mr. and Mrs. R. Middleton, Miss A. Middleton. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Richardson, Mr. Robert Richardson, jun. Messrs. J. and A. Richardson, Messrs. Thomas, Joseph and John Howey, Coxlodge. Mr. T. Howey, Miss Nancy Howey, Mr. and Mrs. E. Allan Gosforth: Mr. and Mrs. R. Best, Belsay.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Pallister, Mr. John Pallister, Dipton: Mr. and Mrs. Bolam, Dipton: Mr. and Mrs. H. Pallister, Scotswood: Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Consett: Mr. and Mrs. R. Pallister, North Shields: Mr. and Mrs. Hope, Gosforth; Mr. R. Pallister, Birtley; Mr. and Mrs. Jopling, Gosforth; Misses N. and I. Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Gray, Etherley; Mr. and Mrs. Wilks, Willington; Mrs. Watson, Etherley; Mr. and Mrs. Grieveson, Stanley: Mr. and Mrs. Bainbridge, Witton-le-

Wear: Mr. and Mrs. E. Richardson, Amble: Mr. and Mrs. R. Teasdale, Washington.

### **PERSONAL FRIENDS**

Among personal friends of the family who followed in the procession were Mr. and Mrs. J. Robson, Sunderland; Mr. and Mrs. Walbank, Gosforth; Mr. and Mrs. J. Thompson, Usworth; Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Gilliland, Chester-le-Street; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Olds, Washington; Mrs. and Miss Cockburn, Bedlington; Mr. and Mrs. R. Olds, Washington; Mr. and Mrs. B. Hodgson, London; Mr. and Mrs. W. Drummond, Washington; Mr. and Mrs. Hermiston, Mr. and Mrs. Hann, Mrs. Raffles, Miss Owens, Mr. and Mrs. Kirtley, Mr. and Mrs. M. Robinson. Mr. M. Anderson, Clerk to the Washington U.D.C; Mr. R. J. Swaddle, Washington; Mr. George Best, Durham; Mr. and Mrs. Bruce, Chester-le-Street, and others.

### **OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES**

Official representatives were:- Miners' Federation of Great Britain : Mr. Herbert Back, Mr. H. Hicken, Mr. W. S. Hall and Mr. A. J. Cook. Durham Miners' Association: Mr. Jas. Robson (president), Mr. Peter Lee (committee secretary), Mr. Thomas Trotter (general treasurer), Mr. J. E. Swan (compensation secretary) and Mr. James Gilliland (financial secretary); the office staff: Mr. R. Gray (chief clerk), Mr. J. L. Robson, Mr. H. Peacock, Mr. B. Kelly, Mr. J. Hesler, Mr. J. Elliott, Mr. M. Larnach, Mr. W. Swinney, Mr. H. Belshaw, Mr. H. Bainbridge, Mr. T. Bluett, Mr. W. Roxborough, Mr. T. Proud and Mr. W. Coffey.

The Durham Miners' Association Approved Society: Mr. W. Whiteley, M.P. (chairman), Mr. W. Walker (secretary), Mr. E. Trotter, Mr. W. Thompson, Mr. H. W. Carhart, Mr. R. Hind, Mr. N. Harrison, Mr. W. Waugh, Mr. W. Wood, Mr. R. Metcalfe, Mr. S. Pearson, Mr. J. Johnson, Mr. T. N. Turnbull and Mr. A. Venn.

Durham Miners' Executive: Mr. T. Mulgrew, Horden; Mr. George Dowser, Sherburn Hill; Mr. W. Haskett, Washington; Mr. G. Luke, Littleburn; Mr. J. Callaghan, Eldon; Mr. J. Bell, Chopwell; Mr. W. Blyton, Harton; Mr. H. Tunney, Thornley; Mr. W. Cook, Ouston; Mr. T. Moses, Windlestone; Mr. T. Davis, Cockfield; and Mr. N. F. Nattress, Consett.

### **FEDERATION BOARD**

Durham County Mining Federation Board: Mechanics - Messrs. W. Jackson, J. Fletcher, and W. S. Hall. Enginemen - Messrs. George Peart, A. E. Watson, and E. Nicholson. Cokemen - Messrs. T. Hearne, C. Thompson and J. Ogg. Miners - Messrs. R. Wren, L. F. Martin, W. Stewart, J. D. Murray, and James Kelly.

Durham County Enginememen's Association: Mr. George Peart (general secretary), Mr. E. Nicholson (president), Messrs. Orton T. Cowley, W. Holliday, W. V. Shotton, John W. Snowdon, David Peart, A. E. Watson and George F. Howe.

North-Eastern Divisional Council of the I.L.P.: Mrs. Porteous, Shincliffe.

Durham Deputies Association: Mr. George French (general secretary).

Northumberland Deputies' Association: Mr. S. Coulthard.

### **COUNTY M.P.'s**

County Members of Parliament: Mr. W. Whiteley, Blaydon; Mr. John Lawson, Chester-le-Street; Mr. J. Herriotts, Sedgefield; Mr. W. Lawther, Barnard Castle; Mr. J. Ritson, Durham; Mr. R. Richardson, Houghton-le-Spring; Mr. J. Batey, Spennymoor; Rev. H. Dunnico, Consett; Mr. R. J. Wilson, Jarrow; Sir J. B. Melville, M.P. for Gateshead, and Attorney General, was represented by his agent, Mr. H. Stoddart.

Political Agents: Mr. Joseph Foster, Mr. J. Gilliland, Ald. John Cape, Mr. H. Bainbridge, Mr. R. Shotton, Mr. G. W. Bloomfield, and others.

Solicitors to the Durham Miners' Association: Mr. Patrick Bennet, Felling; and Mr. J. E. Brown-Humes, Bishop Auckland.

Auditor, Mr. J. A. Walbank, Chartered Account, of Newcastle; and the Chartered Accountant, Mr. E. Sparks, of the District Wages Board.

National Union of Cokemen: Messrs. T. Hearne, T. Walton, R. Sharkey, T. O'Connell, G. Harding, R. Pearson and R. James.

Trade Union Congress: Mr. John Hill.

Durham Coal-owners' Association: Mr. J. T. Robson.

National Union of County Officers: Mr. T. Palmer, of Stanley.

### **OTHER COALFIELDS**

Lancashire Miners' Association: Mr. P. Pemberton and Mr. H. Roughley.

Yorkshire Miners' Federation: Mr. Herbert Smith.

South Wales Miners' Association: Mr. W. Mainwaring.

Scottish Miners' Federation: Mr. Jas. Doonan.

Northumberland Miners' Association: Mr. W. Golightly (president), and Mr. J. Dobson.

Cleveland Miners' Association: Ald. W. Mansfield and Mr. W. Stephens.

Notts Miners' Association: Mr. W. Carter.

Midland Miners' Federation: Mr. Blakemore.

### **AGED MINERS**

Durham County Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association: Mr. A. Macdonald, Newcastle; Mr. C. Tobin, Deaf Hill; Mr. W. Walton, Medomsley; Mr. J. D. Murray, Browney; Mr. Matthew White, Water-houses, and Mr. John Adair.

Northumberland and Durham Miners' Permanent Relief Fund; Mr. J. Cook, Mr. T. Neville, Mr. J. Errington, Mr. J. Caine, Mr. J. Mulby, Mr. M. Davey, Mr. W. Peel Cross, Mr. J. Belshaw, Mr. J. Gilliland, Mr. G. Addison, Mr. John Garrigan and Mr. B. Oliver.

The Salvation Army: Major Calvert and Adjutant Knapman.

The Mines Department: Mr. W. Wainwright, representing Mr. T. Greenland Davies.

### **THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

Others present included: The Mayor of Durham (Coun. H. Murdoch), the Deputy-Mayor (Coun. W. W. Wilkinson), Coun. J. W. Wood, Coun. T. Plummer, Colonel W. C. Blakett, C.B.E., Mr. T. F. Brass, O.B.E., Mr. J. Cummins, Walbottle ; Mr. W. B. Charlton, Mr. S. Galbraith, Mr. Joseph Snaith, representing the management and officials of Burnhope Colliery; Mr. M. Kirsop, Winlaton.

Mr. T. B. Tilley, Director of Education for the County: Mr. J. R. Edis, Mr. N. S. Holiday, representing North Brancepeth Coal Company ; Mr. A. E. Paxton, representing Bearpark Coal Company; Mr. W. E. Goodenough, Langley Park Colliery; the Rev. W. Hodgson, representing Bishop Auckland Labour Party; Mr. Joseph Bray, Mr. S. Smith, Mr. J. Hunter, Mr. F. Willey, Mr. Edwin Potts.

Alderman W. N. Smith, chairman of the Durham County Education Committee; Mr. James Tynen, Mr. J. W. Taylor, Mr. George Morley, Chief Constable of the County ; Mr. J. Short, Mr. J. Mason, Mr. J. Portway, Mr. Aubin, Mr. John Donkin, and Mr. H. M. Adair, representing the Northumberland and Durham Club Stewards' Association; Mr. James Thurkettle, Mr. D. Fleming, Mr. R. W. Glass, Whickham; Mr. P. Ryle and Mr. K. M. Guthrie, Crook; Mr. R. W. Hodgson, Nettlesworth; Mr. W. Armin, Lanchester; Mr. George Walden, Pelton; Mr. J. D. Marriner. Mr. C. Cumpson, Birtley; Mr. R. H. Dick. Chester-le-Street, and many others.

## **DEAN IN THE PULPIT**

The impressive service in the Jubilee Church was conducted by the superintendent minister, the Rev. J. Henderson, who was supported by the Dean of Durham (Dr. Welldon), the Rev. G. B. Richardson, Gateshead (formerly of Durham), and the Rev. T. W. Bevan. Miss Heslop presided at the organ and played *O Rest in the Lord* as the mourners were assembling.

“A passionate affection for his fellows - We can ill spare him in these days of difficulty - Let there rise up among us men like him, of character, of devotion, of great wisdom.” These were some of the phrases in the wonderful prayer offered by Mr. Henderson.

After the hymn, *O God, our help in ages past*, the Rev. G. B. Richardson addressed the great congregation. During his ministry at the Jubilee Church, he said, he had the privilege of the friendship of Mr. Richardson and the right of entry to his home. He came to know him and learned to love him. He loved him as a big human and because of his rugged greatness.

### **“ HIS OWN BIG HEART ”**

“I came to admire his sanity,” said the speaker. “I came to feel something of the throb of his own big heart, pulsing with sympathy. I came to feel something of that abandon of his, the readiness with which he gave himself to the cause that he believed was God's cause, and to which he had been called.

“I knew him in his home, and if you have never met W. P. Richardson in his home you can never claim to have known him. As he took off the mere robes of office, and put aside some of the responsibility of his calling, he became a big boy again. You heard him crack a joke and sing a song. It was then you saw him, and it was then you knew him.

### **A HOME-LOVER**

“I knew him as a home-maker and a home-lover. I have seen him come into that home weary and tired, but I have seen a smile upon his face, the smile of one who knew when he crossed that threshold no jarring note would be heard, but that he would hear everything conducing to his restoration and recovery.

I have seen him as he enjoyed the ministry of loving hands, the loving hands of a true helpmate, who provided for him the way of escape from all that did fret and chafe him in the world without. I have seen the big, strong man bend, and as he bent I realised something of his greatness. It was in his home that you saw him at his best.

I have been in that home when songs were sung, when laughter was ringing, when the joy bells were ringing, and I have been in it when the



shadows gathered, I was in that home when the big man bent under a terrible load, and felt that it was more than he could bear, and I was in that home when he straightened himself again, and knew there was that call from the big world outside, and he must forget himself in the work that lay before him.

### **RELIGIOUS MAN**

Mr. Richardson was a religious man. He was not like some others who, as the years pass, and as the honours of office come to them, forget some of the simplicity of the earlier years, and lay to one side some of the things that matter in the days of stress and struggle. Mr. Richardson knew something of the worth of religion (voices: 'hear, hear'). He realised that religion could provide him with the comfort, stimulus and inspiration that nothing else could provide. He loved his church and his God, and this church is the one at which he was so regular in attendance.

I have known him arrive from the Continent at midnight on Saturday and be in his place here on Sunday morning after a strenuous week, wearied and fretted, and bending almost under the load of his responsibility, anxious to know what was going on; often twice on a Sunday singing God's praises, and listening, as few men do listen, to the message of the ministry. He was not there because the minister was planned, but he was there whether minister or layman.

### **SEEKING HIS GOD**

I have seen him kneel there (pointing to the front seat), and I have heard him pray in the prayer meeting. It was not the prayer of the politician: it was the prayer of a man seeking his God, or a man trying to bring others nearer to God.

Through the days of a certain crisis he found help on his knees, and in the hour when that great domestic affliction came to him, it was there that he found his feet and won his victory. I cannot speak of the services rendered to the miners in this county and country. Others will pay their unstinted tribute to him as a leader of men; as a wise and sane guide. I am going to pay my tribute to a good man, to a good husband, to a great father.

### **IN THE HEARTS OF HIS BAIRNS**

William Richardson will, of course, live in the annals of the miners' movement, but he will also live in the hearts of his bairns. They will long call to mind the memory of a big soul, a generous-hearted man; one who gave himself without stint, never counting the cost; a man of very simple faith, but of steadfast purpose, and of unflinching allegiance to what he believed was true and right."

The closing hymn was *Now the labourer's task is o'er*, and after the Benediction, pronounced by the Dean of Durham, Miss Heslop played the Dead March in *Saul*. Then the sad procession wended its way to the cemetery.

### **AT THE GRAVESIDE**

A great multitude gathered around the grave and heard Mr. Henderson pronounce the committal sentences. Councillor Lee and Mr. Cook addressed the assembly.

Standing upon the mound, Mr. Lee remarked that it was always sad to stand by an open grave. Memory took them back and things almost forgotten came back to mind. By the side of an open grave there was great solemnity. The open grave was sometimes a place where they could form a resolution which might change the whole outlook of life.

### **FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO**

“Forty-five years ago,” said Mr. Lee, “as a boy, Mr. Richardson stood by an open grave. It was the grave of his father, who had been killed in a colliery explosion. He saw the noble life of his father, and in the next few years he found with his sisters and brothers a great struggle for existence. He resolved that he would do what good was in his power to make the mining conditions more safe and secure for his fellows, and to make home and village life a purer and sweeter thing. These resolves he followed step by step, and in early manhood became a local leader of men, not only in the trade union world, but in those social services which help to make our village life more secure.

He also took part in the wider movement. He was one of the first, along with his brother, Tom, to start the Independent Labour Party in their village, and he worked on, trying his best to improve the conditions of life of the people. For ten years I have known him as a colleague, working with him day by day, and in those ten years the mining world has seen remarkable changes. No one in the mining world wished better for the working people than did Mr. Richardson.

### **MONUMENTS OF THE FUTURE**

The days are changing. The future will not see a monument in bronze or stone put up to those who destroy life. The monument will be for those who, like our brother, have been trying to save life. The monument will be to a more happy and contented people. That was the monument that Mr. Richardson would wish.

May the children who, three years ago lost their mother, and today are seeing their father laid away, never know sorrow without hope. As he gave his life for the children of others, let us do what we can that the lives of his own

children will be sweeter and better, and let us have a good word for them in the memory of our dear brother William Pallister Richardson.”

### **MR. COOK’S TRIBUTE**

Mr. Cook then took his place upon the mound.

“It is my painful duty,” he began, “to stand at this open grave not only to pay reverence to a loyal comrade and courageous fighter for the class to which he belonged, but, at this moment, to remind the miners in this great concourse, of the responsibilities of men like W. P. Richardson. I ask you not to wait until they are gone, but to pay reverence that is due to them when they are alive; not to be mourners only at their gravesides, while not aiding them in the struggle when they are fighting for the rights of men.

I am taking the place of the Right Hon. T. Richards, the President of the Federation, in paying a last tribute of respect to one of the most loyal and courageous of comrades. W. P. Richardson and I have both been together in the Garden of Gethsemane. You have lost a leader. The family has lost a father. I have lost one of the most courageous advisers.

### **IN THE DARKEST DAYS**

He was an optimist in the darkest days of our trials of 1926 and since. I have lost a friend I could ill afford to lose in the great and responsible stage upon which our organisation is entering. He was a Socialist as I am. He would be proud that I should say that at the open grave. He never apologised for the faith that was in him.

W. P. Richardson carried the cross of the Durham miners’ sufferings, both employed and unemployed, and he was hoping for the resurrection. But he had faith, as I have, that our people we going to have better times, because we are entitled to them.

The suddenness of the death of W. P. should make us realise that life is too short to quarrel, hearts too precious to break. He was not more perfect than any of you are; but he was human, and sometimes more human than most of us. May his sudden death make us dearer to one another.

To the general public, to the clergy, to miners’ leaders and to trade union leaders, I would say, when we are struggling for the right, help us, and do not reserve all the nice things you would say for our graveside. We feel we need some of those nice things while we are alive.

W. P. Richardson died while serving the folk he loved, and I hope and pray while standing at his grave that I will gain something of his example, his courage. He faced the unpopular as well as the popular with courage and

determination. He had principles which he stuck to. 'Right' was his motto. He was a friend indeed to those who were oppressed. The Durham miners and the miners of Great Britain have lost a champion and a comrade. I shall take back with me the inspiration of his example and of his courage from this solemn moment by his grave. He need not fear death.

He did his duty as a father, as a man, and as a leader."

### **CONCLUSION**

In the foregoing pages I have put on record the life and character of one of "the lowly poor," who did far more for the common people than many of the so-called great men who have figured largely in the history of our country. Let those have all the honour due, but let us not forget to honour our own.

**Yours faithfully,**

**W. STRAKER**