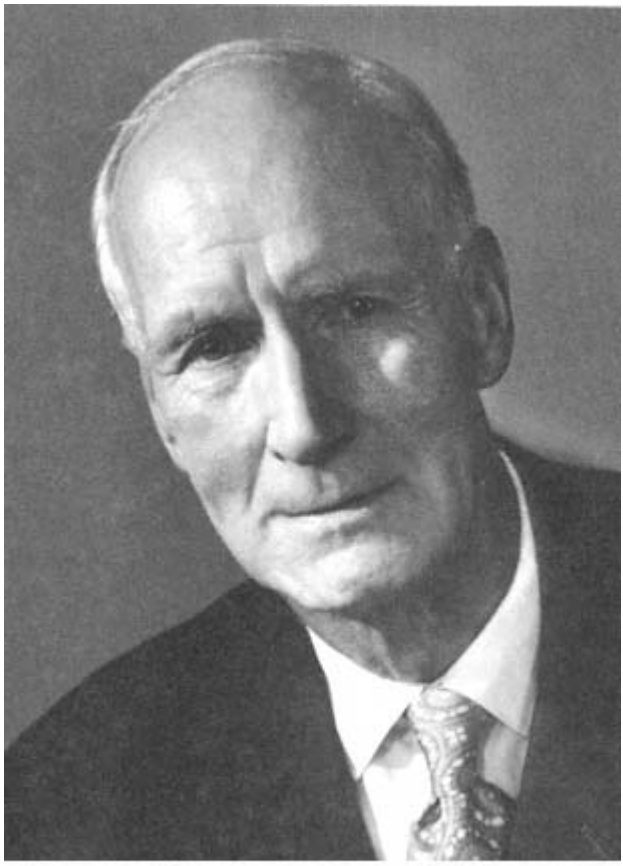

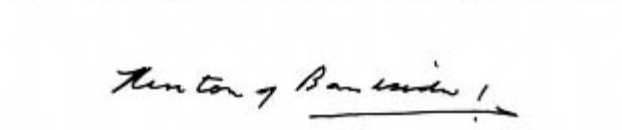

Lord Christopher Hinton of Bankside

1901-1983

By Walker L. Cisler

Lord Hinton of Bankside, deputy chairman, Electricity Supply Research Council at the Electricity Council, died in London, England, on June 22, 1983, at the age of eighty-two. He was a highly respected, internationally known engineer and executive as a result of his activities in the World Energy Conference, of which he was honorary chairman of the International Executive Council, and his pioneering work in nuclear energy and power systems engineering.

In the August 1983 issue of the British magazine *Atom,* the following statement appeared:

> With the death of Lord Hinton at the age of 82, Britain has lost one of its great contemporary engineers, and his passing brings a measure of sadness to all those who were privileged to serve him in the early days of nuclear power in this country. A brilliant technologist and outstanding administrator, his strength stemmed largely from an unswerving faith in what he was doing, backed with a steely resolve and a broad mastering of the engineering disciplines.

He was born on May 12, 1901, at Tisbury, Wiltshire, England, and educated at Cambridge University, graduating from Trinity College in 1926 with 1st Class Honors. He was a member of seven of the principal engineering institutes in Britain and an honorary member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He was an honorary fellow,

Trinity College, Cambridge, 1957, and a fellow of the Royal Society, 1954. Hinton received honorary doctor's degrees from five universities in Britain, the Albert Medal and the Order of Merit among many other awards, and the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun (2nd Class), 1966. He was Knighted in 1951, became a Knight Commander of the British Empire in 1957, and a Life Peer in 1965. He was chancellor of the University of Bath from 1966 to 1980, special adviser to the World Bank, and from 1962 to 1968 chairman of the International Council and British National Committee, World Energy Conference. He was elected a foreign associate of the National Academy of Engineering in 1976.

Hinton had a combination of abilities that made him an unusually effective engineer. He was an excellent engineer with a full knowledge of fundamentals; he was a good organizer of large technical projects; he was far-seeing and most persuasive on matters of technical policy; and, perhaps most important of all, he firmly believed in the importance of whatever project he undertook, which gave him the courage and tenacity to see them successfully completed.

His employment began with Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), and at the age of twenty-nine he was appointed chief engineer of the Alkali Groups. While at ICI, he was selected to start building atomic power plants. How well he succeeded is attested to by the completion of Britain's first four major atomic plants in six years, a tremendous achievement by today's standards. Beginning in 1946 at Risley with the miscellaneous staff of twelve, he laid the foundations for the Nuclear Power Center, which is among the largest and best of its kind in the world.

Any tribute to Lord Hinton must make reference to his founding role in fast breeder technology. The decision to build the Dounreay Fast Reactor (DFR) in 1954 showed his far-sighted assessment of the major role fast reactors would one day play. He personally visited Thurso, near the DFR site, on several occasions to explain to the local people the

need for Dounreay, laying the foundation of overwhelming local support for the fast reactor plants. In 1977 he returned to Dounreay to shut down the DFR he helped to conceive nearly twenty-five years earlier. DFR had fully met the task for which it was built: to demonstrate that fast reactors could be constructed and safely operated. Until his death, Lord Hinton remained interested in the newer Prototype Fast Reactor and the future development of the fast breeder reactor system.

In 1957 he was appointed the first chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board of Great Britain, a position he held until 1964. During that period, there was a vast expansion of the electric power grid in England. In this undertaking Lord Hinton exhibited most strongly his administrative as well as his technical abilities. His insistence that safety and reliability were of first importance in a power plant, whether fossil or nuclear, served the power industry of Great Britain very well indeed. Equally of note were his early concerns about the environment and pollution, which led to his development of the Board's research activities. In his retirement until his death, Lord Hinton was an active deputy chairman of the industry's research council.

Hinton's principal activity in the international energy field was through his long association with the World Power Conference, now renamed the World Energy Conference. Its purpose from the beginning was to bring together those concerned, at a high international level, with the development and use of all sources and forms of energy. This objective was, and is still, mainly achieved by holding a congress organized for a large and still growing number of countries.

In 1962 Hinton accepted the chairmanship of the British National Committee of the World Energy Conference, and in the same year he was elected to a six-year term as chairman of the Conference International Executive Committee. He was in a large measure responsible for the high esteem held throughtout the world for the World Energy Conference.

He was instrumental in changing the focus of the Conference from power only to the much wider scope of energy as a whole.

Hinton's precise grasp of energy problems confronting the developing countries and his ability to find practical and acceptable engineering solutions to such problems won him friends in many countries. His contributions to this worthwhile effort will be long remembered.

Because of his unrelenting pursuit of excellence, he was sometimes referred to as a technical autocrat. Yet, with a gentle side to his character, he was very much a man for his time and has left a void that will be difficult to fill not only in his own country, but elsewhere as well. Even at eighty-two, his remarks to students at the University of Bath, of which he was the first chancellor, are indicative of his optimism for the future and his oft-demonstrated courage in meeting head-on its problems: "You are going out into a changing world . . . but all change is a challenge. I am not offering you any pity. What I wish is that I was young enough to share the challenge with you."