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[W.J.W.]

Dr. James Bonar

The death of Dr. James Bonar at the advanced age of eighty-eight years was reported in the *London Times* (January 20, 1941). Dr. Bonar had established his reputation as a distinguished economist well before the turn of the present century. This brief note relates only to his connection with Canada. He was a member of the British Civil Service and when the Royal Mint decided to establish a branch at Ottawa Dr. Bonar was placed in charge as Deputy Master of the Canadian branch. He spent twelve years in Canada until the date of his retirement, June 30, 1919.

Apart from his professional duties Dr. Bonar took a keen interest in Canadian economic life. In 1909 on the occasion of the visit of the British Association for the Advancement of Science to Canada he read a paper on "The History of Canadian Currency." He was active in the formation of the Canadian Political Science Association, serving on the first nominating committee and becoming a member of the first executive. At the Ottawa meetings of the newly formed Association in 1913 his paper on "Canada's Balance of Trade"¹ opened up for consideration a field later to be so brilliantly explored by Professor Viner. After his return to England he read a paper to the Royal Statistical Society on "The Mint and the Precious Metals in Canada" which drew the comment from Professor Edgeworth that Dr. Bonar had "only two rivals in the literary treatment of mintage details—Jevons and De Foville."

In addition to the establishment of the Canadian branch of the Mint, chiefly for the routine purposes of coinage, Dr. Bonar's tenure of office was marked by the important services the Ottawa Mint was able to render to the British government during the Great War. At that

¹*Proceedings of the Canadian Political Science Association*, vol. I, pp. 82-9.

time its small refinery was greatly expanded for the purpose of refining rough gold from South Africa and other places into fine bars for the Bank of England. For three years the Mint under Dr. Bonar was busily engaged on this work. It produced fine bars to the value of \$352,897,837, the product of 19,492,359 ounces of rough gold. Silver was also recovered from the rough gold to the value of \$1,244,354. The Mint also turned out six millions of shilling blanks to relieve the home Mint and supplied silver, bronze, and copper-nickel coinage for Newfoundland and Jamaica. In the earlier days of the war with its skilled mechanics the Mint manufactured 11,389 dialsights and 20,198 bracket eyepieces for large guns.²

A distinguished scholar of an earlier and less hurried age, Dr. Bonar was extremely kind and encouraging to young Canadian economists, not too confident of their own powers. It is interesting that the Canadian Political Science Association, a relatively young organization, through Dr. Bonar should be linked with the older economists in the classic tradition. I last saw Dr. Bonar after his retirement at his home in Hampstead, London, in 1921, still alert, interested, and informed concerning the trend of Canadian affairs. [D. A. MACG.]

²*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, March, 1921, p. 228.

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 See *The Economic Library of Jacob H. Hollander* (compiled by E. A. G. Marsh, Baltimore, 1937), pp. 279-80 for titles of a number of short pamphlets by Dr. Bonar.