

## REAR-ADMIRAL R. M. BELLAIRS

Rear-Admiral Roger Mowbray Bellairs, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., who died yesterday at the age of 74, was held to be one of the most brilliant officers of his time until, as captain commanding the Rodney—the flower of the service among captains' commands—he became a victim of the Invergordon mutiny in 1931.

His officers and men were efficient and contented, but when the stress came his personal popularity could not prevent the ship's becoming the centre of disaffection. He was forthwith relieved of his duties—the only officer in the Fleet to be made a scapegoat for the result of the ill-advised action in higher quarters—and though he was not superseded until the end of his normal period of command in 1932, there was a black mark against his name. When he reached the top of the captains' list in 1932 and was promoted rear-admiral, he was at once placed on the retired list and thus excluded from any further sea-going command.

The fourth son of Lieutenant-General Sir William Bellairs he was born on August 9, 1884. He entered the Britannia in May, 1899, passed out as midshipman as the head of his term and in his further examinations for lieutenant gained accelerated promotion by taking all "firsts." He specialized in torpedoes and was selected for the advanced course at Greenwich, and qualified at the Staff College in 1913.

Throughout the War of 1914-18 he served on the staffs of Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty in the Grand Fleet. He was promoted commander in December, 1915, was commended for service in action at Jutland, and on the dispersal of the Grand Fleet in April, 1919, was awarded the C.M.G. From 1919 to 1925 he was naval assistant to Lord Beatty at the Admiralty and was promoted to captain in 1920 at the early age of 35. He was flag captain and Chief of Staff on the East Indies station from 1925 to 1927, director of plans at the Admiralty from 1928 to 1930 and commanded the battleship Rodney from 1930 to 1932. In 1930 he was awarded the C.B.

From 1932 until 1939 he was the British naval representative on the permanent Advisory Commission of the League of Nations. During the Second World War when the duties of that office lapsed, he was employed on special service at the Admiralty, in various capacities as an extra assistant to the First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound. After the latter's death, he was employed chiefly as Admiralty representative on post-war planning committees. He was made C.B.E. in 1957.

Bellairs had a clear analytical brain, and had a remarkable capacity for rapidly grasping the whole of a complex problem, forming a balanced judgment on it and working out a logical, workable and well-balanced solution. That quality was utilized to the full when he was personal assistant to Beatty during the difficult post-war period, and again when he was Director of Plans in an era of International Naval Conferences and treaties. The Navy was the poorer for his relegation to minor roles when he reached flag rank. He married in 1909 Veronica Beatrice, daughter of the late Colonel A. H. Wavell, The Welch Regiment, and had two daughters, both of whom married naval officers.