

COL. C. H. D. RYDER

The Times 16 July 1945

LATE SURVEYOR-GENERAL OF INDIA

Colonel C. H. D. Ryder, R.E., C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., the eminent surveyor and map-maker, formerly Surveyor-General of India, died at Aldwick Bay, Bognor Regis, on Friday, at the age of 77.

Charles Henry Dudley Ryder was born on June 28, 1868, the seventh son of Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer Charles Dudley Ryder and his wife Julia, *née* Money. He was educated at Cheltenham College and was gazetted to the Royal Engineers. In 1892 he married Ida Josephine, eldest daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel E. E. Grigg. In 1895 he was a surveyor with the late Colonel Woodthorpe on the Mekong Boundary Commission, and, with the rank of captain, joined Major Davies in 1898 in Yunnan, in south-western China, to explore, map, and report upon the whole province. They started at Bhamo, and within a year had visited and reported on practically every town and surveyed every important route, Ryder's own share comprising 1,400 miles of new routes. They made accurate maps, radically altering the existing ones, of nearly the whole of Yunnan, which proved the basis of the present Survey of India maps; and extended their journey northwards to Szechuan and Chinese Tibet, reaching Shanghai, down the Yangtze, in July, 1900.

Ryder served in 1901-02 with the Chinese Expeditionary Force, being awarded a medal and mentioned in dispatches; and he was present at the relief of Peking, where he again did valuable survey work. After his promotion to major, he joined the Tibet Frontier Commission at Kampa Dzong on September 24, 1903. When, in 1904, a mission under Young-husband crossed the Tibetan frontier to insist upon the observance of the treaty signed at Darjeeling in 1890, he was officer in charge of the survey party to Lhasa, where, after some fighting, the Mission dictated terms on September 7, and a new treaty was signed. With Captain Rawling he then led an expedition to explore the country westwards from Gyantse, by way of Gartok, to the borders of Tibet, and across them to Simla, with important geographical results. Accompanied only by two assistant officers and two orderlies, with no armed escort whatever, they travelled through 1,000 miles of Tibet and were everywhere well

by way of Gartok, to the borders of Tibet, and across them to Simla, with important geographical results. Accompanied only by two assistant officers and two orderlies, with no armed escort whatever, they travelled through 1,000 miles of Tibet and were everywhere well received. Ryder surveyed and mapped the upper course of the Tsangpo (or Brahmaputra) from Shigatse (where he visited the Tashi Lama) to its source; completed the survey of the Sutlej river from its source to the borders of India; surveyed the Mansarowar lake region; and mapped the Gartok branch of the Indus and the region at the back of the Himalaya. Many snow-peaks were fixed, and Mount Everest definitely established as the highest in existence. Large scale plans were made for the first time of Lhasa and Gyantse, and, having surveyed an area of about 40,000 square miles, connecting Lhasa with British India, the expedition arrived at Simla on January 11, 1905.

Ryder received the D.S.O. in this year, the Patron's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, and the Silver Medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, in recognition of his work in making known this great area of southern and south-western Tibet, and for his earlier survey of Yunnan.

In December, 1913, he was appointed Chief Survey Officer of the Turko-Persian Boundary Commission; and by October, 1914, had demarcated the whole 1,180 miles of the frontier from the Persian Gulf to Mount Ararat, setting up 227 boundary pillars and making a fresh survey of practically all the country concerned. Work in this mountainous country was complicated by sandstorms, heavy rains, thieves, in the south by great heat and lack of water, and in the north by the tension caused by the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. The results were embodied in 36 maps, of which each nation concerned received two copies. Twenty-five were new maps, and 10 were sheets of the *Carte Identique*. The success of this expedition was very largely due to Ryder's efficiency and capacity for working smoothly with many different types and nationalities, meeting awkward situations with tact.

He became Surveyor-General in India in 1914, and was made a C.I.E. in 1915. During the war he served as colonel with the Mesopotamia Field Force from 1917 to 1918, and again won mention in dispatches. From June to October of the latter year he was Deputy-Director of Surveys, Baghdad, and he was made C.B. in 1922. He retired in 1924. There were three sons and three daughters of his marriage. One son was killed in action in 1940; another, Commander R. E. D. Ryder, the polar explorer, was awarded the V.C. for his part in the attack on St. Nazaire in March, 1942, when he commanded the naval forces.