

# BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

## ROLAND STUART ANDREWS

Roland Stuart Andrews, C.M.G., D.Sc., Chairman and Managing Director, Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, died suddenly on 14th October, 1961, at the age of 64. He was one of the very few distinguished scientists in Australia who had risen to a position of eminence in industry. His services to the community were over a very broad front, but it is the gas industry, in particular, which will miss him most, since he had been for a long period its acknowledged leader.

Born in Sydney on 21st September, 1897, Andrews graduated in science at the University of Sydney in 1919. He went immediately into the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, in which company he served for six years, and in which he obtained an excellent introduction to a long and valuable career in industry. Despite his dedication to the development of Australian industry, he made the time to serve as a Head Teacher in Chemistry at the Sydney Technical College from 1925–1927. He joined the Metropolitan Gas Company, Melbourne, as Chief Chemist, in 1927. There he carried out the research work on the constitution and properties of Australian tars and their adaptation to local road construction methods; on the nature and properties of the unsaturated hydrocarbons produced in carbonisation of Australian coals; and on the complete gasification of Australian bituminous and brown coals. These researches earned for him the degree of D.Sc. of the University of Melbourne, and also the Sir Frederick West International Prize for research on tar, awarded in 1935. In 1936, he received the premier research award of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, the H. G. Smith Medal.

To provide a continuous supply of town gas for Melbourne over the years has been no easy task. When Andrews joined the Metropolitan Gas Company it was in the hands of a somewhat elderly and conservative Board, but gradually his progressive views prevailed and the Company turned for its raw material from a precarious supply of black coal to the nearby Victorian deposits of brown coal. Following a visit to Germany in 1946, Andrews recommended the installation of a Lurgi gasification plant, and in 1949 had his recommendations accepted. Thus the Morwell plant—installed at a cost of £10,000,000 and operating on open cut brown coal—is primarily due to his vision and energy.

He was soon to take over greater responsibilities, first as Chief Technical Officer in 1950, and next as Chairman and Managing Director, in 1951, of the newly-formed Gas and Fuel Corporation. Beset with all the administrative cares of a large industrial undertaking, Andrews yet found time to maintain a firm grasp of its changing technology. He was Chairman of the C.S.I.R.O. Con-

sultative Committee on Brown Coal Research and Development in 1957–58, and was a member of the Commonwealth Coal Utilisation Research and Advisory Committee (C.U.R.A.C.) at the time of his death.

Andrews understood and was respected by those with whom he came into contact within his Company, at whatever level they served. He had no serious periods of industrial unrest—a tribute to his integrity, persuasiveness and tolerance. A magnificent public speaker, his services were greatly in demand. Members of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, of which he was President of the Victorian Branch in 1945–46, will recall several fine addresses he delivered before them, and the quiet dignified manner in which he could conduct a meeting.

In 1957 Her Majesty conferred on him the C.M.G. for his contribution to science, and in the same year he became a Fellow of the Academy. Honoured also by fellowship of several other societies and institutes, he played an active part in them all, which serves to emphasise his very wide knowledge over many fields of business management and applied science.

Although public life took up so much of his time, Andrews greatly enjoyed his private life and was an active churchman. He is survived by his wife and two sons, to whom the Academy extends its sympathy.

*I. W. Wark*