

SILVER MEDAL 1975

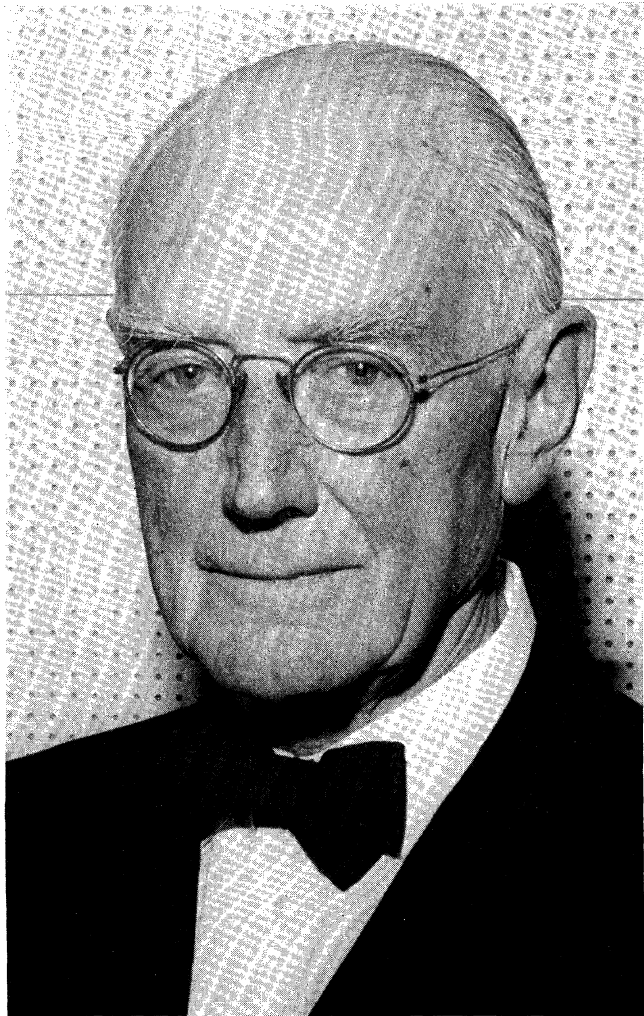
SIR GEOFFREY VICKERS

In awarding its Silver Medal to Sir Geoffrey Vickers, the Society pays tribute to a man who had already gained the highest distinction in public life before turning his attention to the problems pertaining to economic, political and ecological systems.

After graduating from Oxford, Sir Geoffrey served with the Sherwood Foresters in the First World War gaining the Victoria Cross in 1915. After the war he spent the next twenty years of his life as a solicitor. In the Second World War he was re-commissioned to be in charge of Economic Intelligence at the Ministry of Economic Warfare and a member of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Chiefs of Staff. He received a knighthood for these services. Sir Geoffrey next acted as legal adviser to the National Coal Board from its inception and became the Board Member responsible for manpower, training, education, health and welfare in 1948. He retired in 1955.

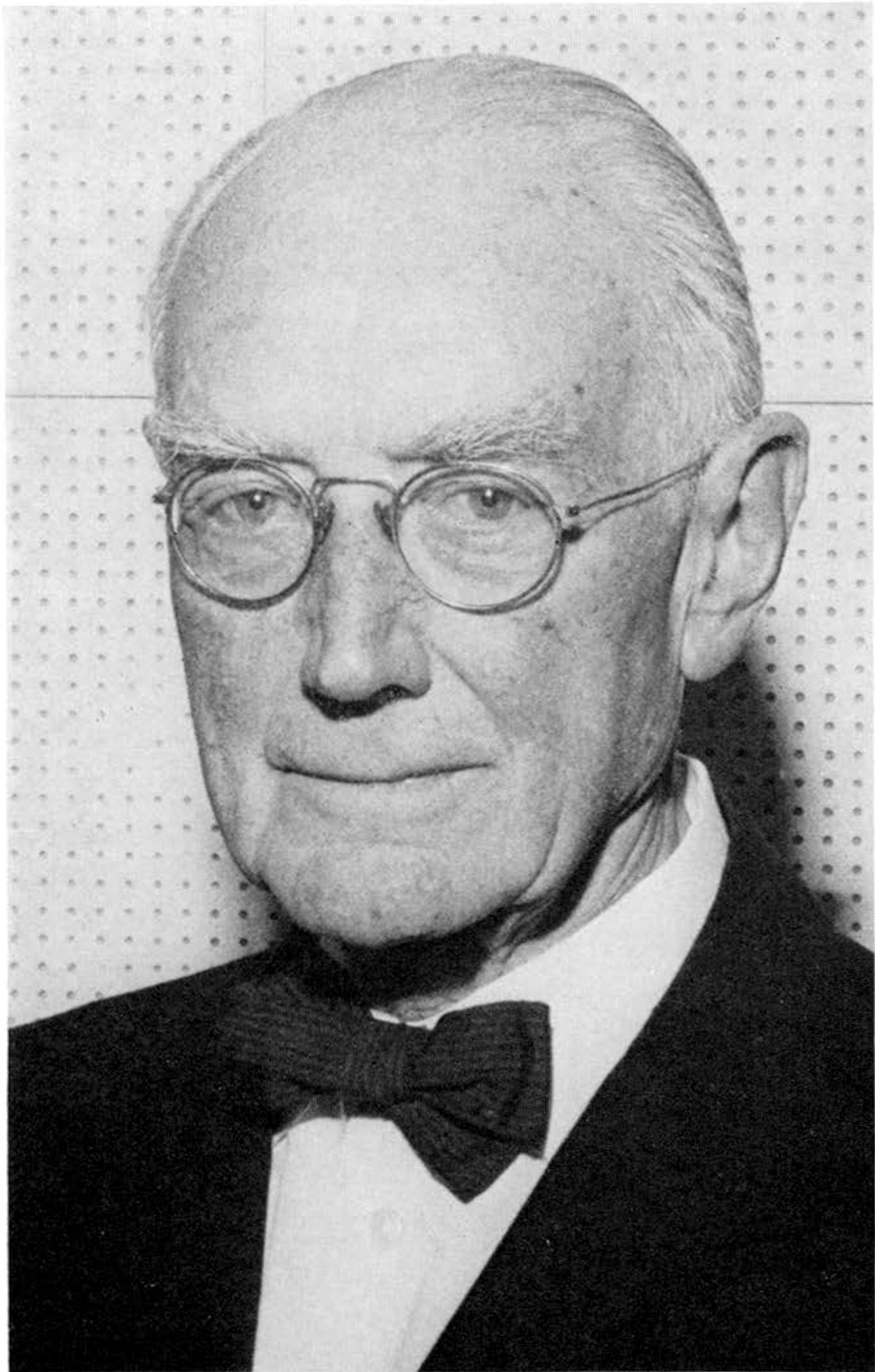
Since his retirement, Sir Geoffrey has continued to be active on Boards and advisory councils, and has been much concerned with the social aspects of medicine, particularly mental health. However, the Society is honouring him for his lecturing and writing in the field of cybernetics and general systems. No one seems to understand as well as Sir Geoffrey the practical aspects of managerial, economic and political systems in transition or how to view these aspects at the level of regulation or of policy.

This work is of central importance to Operational Research because of the way in which Sir Geoffrey has absorbed systems ideas—an absorption based on deep study and true understanding—and with extraordinary clarity of expression transmutes these ideas into a serious study of our social institutions. He creatively bridges the gaps between the two cultures. For this same reason his work is essential reading to those many Operational Research workers who see that a necessary requirement for the advancement of our subject is an improved understanding of the way organisations work. There are few true prophets in this field, but Sir Geoffrey Vickers is certainly one of them.



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(Photograph by Rupert Abbs, Loughborough)



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