

HALL, GEORGE HENRY (1881 - 1965), first Viscount Hall of Cynon Valley (created 1946), politician

Name: George Henry Hall
Date of birth: 1881
Date of death: 1965
Spouse: Alice Martha Hall (née Walker)
Spouse: Margaret Hall (née Jones)
Parent: Ann Hall (née Guard)
Parent: George Hall
Gender: Male
Occupation: politician
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: Walter Thomas Morgan

Born 31 December 1881 at Penrhiwceiber, Mountain Ash, Glamorganshire, son of George Hall (died 1889), miner, a native of Marshfield, county Gloucester, and Ann Guard, his wife (died 1928) who came from Midsomer Norton, near Radstock, Somerset. He was educated at Penrhiwceiber elementary school, but on attaining his twelfth birthday, he was compelled to leave to take up work in the Penrhiwceiber Colliery, so that he could assist his widowed mother, who had been left with a large family to support. This was all the formal education he received. But a prolonged absence from work, following an accident in the colliery, gave him an opportunity for self-education and extensive reading. He worked at the coal face until 1911, when he was appointed colliery checkweighman and local agent of the S.W.M.F. In 1908 he won a seat on the Mountain Ash U.D.C., as the first Labour member for the Penrhiwceiber ward. He remained a member of this body for 18 years, during which he became chairman of both the U.D.C. and of the Education Committee. In the general election of 1922 he was returned as Labour member for the Aberdare division of the Merthyr Borough, defeating the sitting member [C.B. Stanton](#) and retained his seat with large majorities (twice unopposed) until he was elevated to the peerage in 1946. In the 1929 Labour Government he was given office as Civil Lord of the Admiralty. During the years 1931-35 he matured greatly as a parliamentarian. Hitherto he had concentrated mainly on the affairs of the coalmining industry of which he had an expert knowledge, but now, owing to the depleted ranks of his party, he was frequently called upon to speak from the front bench in debates on a variety of topics outside his previous range of interest. He was also a powerful propagandist for his party outside parliament; he waged a vigorous campaign in south Wales in the years 1934-35 against the Means Test regulations. In 1940 he was elected leader of the Welsh Parliamentary Party, but resigned when in May 1940 he took office in the wartime coalition as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Colonial Office. He was made a P.C. in 1942 and became successively Financial Secretary of the Admiralty, 1942-43 and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under Anthony Eden, 1943-45. On the formation of the Labour Government in July 1945 he became Secretary of State for the Colonies and continued in this post until October 1946, when he was made First Lord of the Admiralty. He had acquired a deep and abiding interest in the navy and was very happy in this office but owing to advancing years and indifferent health he decided to retire in May 1951. He was Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, 1947-51, and continued as Deputy Leader of the Labour peers till the end of 1953, when his active involvement in politics virtually ceased.

He was a first-class constituency M.P. Always courteous and approachable, he was ever ready to take up the grievances of his constituents. Aberdare owed a great deal to him for his efforts to attract new industries into the town during the dark days of the depression. In 1937 he was able to persuade a new company, Aberdare Cables, to establish their factory in Aberdare and he was eventually invited to join the board of directors. Thanks largely to his efforts Royal Ordnance Factories were established in Robertstown and Rhigos in 1940 and in 1945 the Hirwaun Trading Estate was founded. These developments helped to establish Aberdare as a centre of light industry, which was an inestimable boon for a town which had become too heavily dependent on coal.

He was awarded honorary LL.D. degrees by the University of Birmingham in 1945 (of which Anthony Eden was chancellor) and the University of Wales in 1946. Always a faithful member of the Church in Wales he was elected a member of its Representative Body.

Lord Hall was twice married: (1) to Margaret, died of William Jones of Ynysybwl, 12 October 1910. She died 24 July 1941. There were two sons of this marriage, one succeeded to the title and the other was killed on active service when serving as a First Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, 11 May 1942, and (2) Alice Martha Walker, daughter of Ben Walker of Brinklow, Rugby, in 1964. She was a member of the Leicestershire County Council.

He died in Leicester Hospital, 8 November 1965.

Author

Walter Thomas Morgan, (1912 - 1990)

Sources

Aberdare Leader, 13 and 20 November 1965;

The Times, 9 November 1965;

Who was who?,

Burke's ... Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage;

The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdâr.

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Q5540460](#) 

Additional Links

Wikidata: [_1st Viscount Hall](#)

Published date: 2001

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC-RUU/1.0/> 