

THOMAS, JOHN STRADLING (1925-1991), Conservative politician

Name: John Stradling Thomas
Date of birth: 1925
Date of death: 1991
Gender: Male
Occupation: Conservative politician
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: John Graham Jones

He was born on 10 June 1925, the son of Thomas Roger Thomas and Catherine Delahaye. He was educated at Bryntirion School, Bridgend, Rugby School, London University (graduated B.Sc) and the Royal Veterinary College. He became an honorary associate of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the British Veterinary Association. He was called to the bar from the Inner Temple. He was a farmer, a company director and a broadcaster. He served as the chairman of the Carmarthen branch of the NFU, a member of the NFU Council and the NFU Welsh Council, 1963-70. Throughout his life he felt deep commitment to the cause of farmers.

Thomas was a member of the Carmarthen Borough Council, 1961-64. He stood as the Conservative candidate for Aberavon in the general election of 1964, and for Cardiganshire in 1966. He was the Conservative MP for Monmouth, 1970 until his death. By 1987 he had built up his once slender majority to 9,350 votes. Though he rarely spoke in the House of Commons, he was highly regarded as a splendid member of the Speaker's Panel of Chairman, chairing committees with unfailing flair and good humour. He served as a member of the Select Committee on the Civil List, 1970-71. He was Assistant Government Whip, November 1971-October 1973, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, October 1973-March 1974, an opposition whip, 1974-79, and Treasurer of the Royal Household and government deputy chief whip, 1979-83. This was the happiest and the most successful period in his political career. He was also a member of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, 1979-83, and of the Commons Service Committee, 1979-83. He was Minister of State for Wales, 1983-85, having reluctantly agreed to take the position after the death of Michael Roberts MP in February 1983. He readily admitted thereafter that he missed the whip's office sorely. In 1985, Nicholas Edwards, the Secretary of State for Wales, replaced Stradling Thomas with Mark Robinson (Newport West) at the Welsh Office. He was a member of the Bow Group, and was elected president of the Federation of Conservative Clubs in 1984. He was a member of the General Advisory Council to the BBC, and a trustee of the Parliamentary Pension Fund. Stradling Thomas suffered a serious fall in 1987 which almost killed him and thereafter deprived him of his powers and energy. During the last years of his life a conspicuous waning of his powers and his general inactivity in parliament had led to some dissatisfaction in his constituency. His conspicuous absence from a parliamentary debate on the Severn Bridge tolls had greatly irked his constituency party which then refused to endorse Stradling Thomas as their candidate. After an initial display of defiance, he announced his intention to stand down at the next general election. He was knighted in 1985. Thomas married in 1951 Freda, the daughter of Rhys Evans, and they had one son and two daughters. The marriage was dissolved in 1982. He died at London on 29 March 1991.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

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The Independent, 31 March 1991

Western Mail, 1 April 1991

Further Reading

NLW Archives: [General Election... 1964 Aberavon Parliamentary Division Jack Stradling Thomas Your Conservative Candidate](#)

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