

MEMORIAL OF JOSEPH ELLIS THOMSON

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The sudden death of Joseph Ellis Thomson from cerebral haemorrhage on Tuesday, September 26, 1944, came as a sad shock to his colleagues and numerous friends and acquaintances. He had gone about his regular duties during the day and engaged in a pleasant conversation with the writer in the afternoon. He spent the evening with his wife and on retiring for the night complained of a pain in his neck. About fifteen minutes later he said that he felt very bad and the doctor was called. He passed away just after asking a question of the doctor in regard to the treatment.

Joseph Ellis Thomson was born July 27, 1882, at Toronto, Ontario, the son of Daniel Edmund and Elizabeth Hosking Thomson. He made his home in Toronto for his entire life time, except for brief intervals when he was absent for advanced study and a short period when he was engaged in the practice of Mining Engineering.

His hosts of friends included all with whom he was thrown in contact from early childhood, through schools, universities, professional societies, and social organizations, and his passing brings a feeling of sadness to all who knew him.

His early education was in the Model School, Toronto, and the Woodstock Baptist College from which latter institution he entered the School of Practical Science, which before his graduation became the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering of the University of Toronto, where he studied Mining Engineering and took the degree of Bachelor of Applied Science in 1907. At intervals after his graduation he took advanced work at Columbia University, the "Sächsige Bergakademie" in Freiberg, the University of Heidelberg, and Harvard University, from which latter institution he received the degree of Ph.D. in 1929.

As an undergraduate he devoted some of his summers to work with the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company and for a short time after his graduation was employed by the Sterling Coal Company of West Virginia.

The work for which Professor Thomson is best known began with his appointment at the University of Toronto in 1912, where he was successively Demonstrator in Mineralogy (1912-14), Lecturer (1914-21), Assistant Professor (1921-29), Associate Professor (1929-33), Professor (1933-44), and Head of the Department (1943-44).

Early in his scientific career he devoted many of his summers to field work for the Ontario Department of Mines (1910, 1915, 1916) and the Geological Survey of Canada (1918-26), but discontinued this practice



JOSEPH ELLIS THOMSON
1882-1944

in order that he might give a continuous service to the mining industry in the microscopic examination of rocks, ores, and mill products.

In his teaching he was brought more intimately in contact with the students in Engineering, to whom he presented the subject in a manner that would enable them to use it to the best advantage in their professional work.

He was widely known among the mining fraternity in Canada for the excellence of his work, more particularly in the investigation of the opaque ore minerals, in which field he was one of the pioneers in Canada, and was held in high esteem by his colleagues throughout the world. His published papers number about fifty but the confidential reports undoubtedly cover a greater period of study.

In his native city, aside from his university work, he will probably be remembered longest and most gratefully by the Royal Canadian Institute and the Toronto Branch of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, both of which organizations have reason to thank Professor Thomson for his active interest in their welfare, which resulted in greatly increased membership and a sound financial policy. He was active in many community enterprises, being particularly valuable where appeals for financial support were being made or where sound judgment was required. The qualities which facilitated his efforts in this line were directly traceable to his home influences, which involved a certain amount of informal legal education from his father, a prominent lawyer in the city, and a careful training by his mother, which made him a welcome addition to any social group. He was one of the rare men who are given honor in their own city. As one who sat at the same desk with Professor Thomson for a quarter of a century, it is the writer's privilege to say that he deserved every honor that came to him.

On September 11, 1923, he married Edith Marion Dalton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Dalton of Toronto. Together they won a high place in the esteem of those with whom they came in contact.

Professor Thomson was an indefatigable worker, but after the proper time for work had passed he was apparently able to put work completely out of his mind and devote his attention to the type of relaxation most suited to restore mind and body to a proper condition for carrying on his many activities. In early life he was an ardent fisherman and each spring when academic duties were finished he usually spent a week at some favorite lake or river to enjoy this sport before engaging in his summer work. For some reason he discontinued his fishing trips about fifteen years ago and indulged in golf, which offered greater opportunities for social intercourse and gave him the incentive to equal or excell his competitor's record. The hobby to which he devoted most of his spare

time in later years was gardening and his extensive collection of rare dahlias received his attention both winter and summer so that he had an exceptionally fine display, both at his city home and his summer residence, which with characteristic generosity he shared with his friends.

He prized his Fellowship in this Society, of which he was a Charter Fellow, and was seldom absent from the annual meeting, which profited by papers presented by him and by frequent discussion of the papers of others. That the Society held him in high esteem is shown by the honors they gave him: Councillor (1928-31), Vice-President (1935), President (1938).

The breadth of his professional interests and the high esteem in which he was held by his colleagues is shown by the societies of which he was a member:

Member of the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Fellow of the Geological Society of America (Vice-President 1939), Member of the Society of Economic Geologists, Member of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (Secretary, Toronto Branch, 1921-24, Chairman 1924), Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Member of the Walker Mineralogical Club (President 1940-41, Councillor 1938-44). Member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario.

Societies of a more popular type include the Royal Canadian Institute (Secretary 1927-31, Vice-President 1931-35, President 1935-38), The British Association for the Advancement of Science, The English Speaking Union (President, Toronto Branch, 1943).

On the social side he was a member of the Faculty Union, University of Toronto (Secretary-Treasurer, 1931-35, Vice President, 1936-37, President 1939), the Empire Club, the Canadian Club, the York Downs Golf Club. He was an active member of the Park Road Baptist Church.

Professor Thomson is survived by his wife and by two sisters, Mrs. E. G. Long and Miss Winnifred Thomson, both of Toronto.

The simple funeral service, which was followed by interment in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, was held in the Park Road Baptist Church, Toronto.

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