

Andrew Thomson O.B.E, M.A. D.Sc.



The eldest of five sons of William and Georgina Espen Thomson, Andrew Thomson was born at Dobbinton, near Owen Sound, Ontario, on May 18, 1893. He graduated in Honours Physics from the University of Toronto in 1915, was awarded the Master's degree in 1916 and a Townsend Fellowship to Harvard University. In May 1917 he was employed by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. and later that year became a mathematical aide to Thomas Edison.

Until returning to Canada in 1932 he undertook research in the South Pacific and renewed his meteorological studies in Germany and Norway. With the Meteorological Service, Dr. Thomson became the prime organizer and promoter for Canadian participation in the second International Polar Year and undertook planning and organization of an M.A. course in Meteorology at the University of Toronto.

Shortly after the outbreak of war in September 1939, he became the main organizer and administrator of the extensive meteorological program of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan that saw an expansion from 27 to nearly 350 wartime meteorologists on duty at approximately 70 training and operational bases.

From 1945 to 1950 he was, jointly with John Patterson, President of the Canadian Branch of the Royal Meteorological Society, a period that saw a doubling of the membership to 180. The Society activities consisted largely of lectures, often by visiting experts and in conjunction with other societies such as the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada which he also served as President.

Named an Officer of the British Empire in 1946 for his wartime contributions, he became Controller of the Meteorological Service later that year. Dr. Thomson began to boost Canada to a prominent place in international meteorology. In August 1947, he was the host at Toronto meetings of the nine Technical Commissions of the then long-established International Meteorological Organization. In the years that followed, he was one of the founders of the present World Meteorological Organization and served for many years on its Executive Committee. At home he was host to the combined Royal Meteorological Society-American Meteorological Society meetings at Toronto in 1953, and assisted in sponsoring the Toronto meetings of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics in 1955.

Dr. Thomson was awarded the Gold Medal of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, an honorary degree of Doctor of Science from McGill University, and the Patterson Medal for his outstanding contribution to Canadian meteorology for more than 25 years.

Andrew Thomson passed away on 17 Oct 1974 at Orangeville, Ontario.