

# BIOGRAPHY

## Dr. Andrew Thomson (1893-1974)

---

Dr. Andrew Thomson was born near Owen Sound, Ontario, on May 18, 1893. He graduated from the University of Toronto in 1915 in Honour Physics, and later earned a Master's degree from the same institution. After studying under a Townsend Fellowship at Harvard University, he was employed by the Carnegie Institution of Washington and in 1917 became a math assistant to Thomas Edison. In 1922, he accepted the directorship of the geophysical observatory at Apia in Western Samoa.

In 1930, Dr. Thomson went to Europe to study in Germany and Norway. He returned to Canada in late 1931 and joined the Meteorological Service of Canada (known today as the Atmospheric Environment Service) in 1932 as head of the research division. He was the prime organizer of Canadian participation in the second International Polar Year and led the establishment of post-graduate courses in meteorology at the University of Toronto. He also was the main organizer and administrator of the extensive meteorological program required during the Second World War.

In 1946, he was appointed controller of the Canadian Meteorological Service. In subsequent years, Dr. Thomson helped establish the World Meteorological Organization and served for many years on its Executive Committee. He also hosted the first meeting of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics outside Europe in Toronto in 1957.

When he retired in 1959, Dr. Thomson had presided over a period of rapid and remarkable growth for meteorology in Canada. During his tenure as director, marked advances were made in forecasting services, research, instrument development, climatology and training methods.

A unique figure in Canadian meteorology for more than 40 years, he was responsible, in many ways, for the stature that the meteorological service has attained both with the government and with the public.

A fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada in 1952 and received an honorary doctorate degree in science from McGill in 1958.

