

JOSEPH CLARENCE HEMMEON

1879–1963

JOSEPH CLARENCE HEMMEON, for nearly forty years a member of McGill's Department of Economics and Political Science, died on December 27, 1963, at Wolfville, N.S. He was 84 and had lived in quiet retirement near his birth-place since 1945.

A graduate of Acadia (BA, 1898, MA, 1904), he taught at King's College School, Windsor, NS (1899–1903), before moving on to Harvard, where he was a Ricardo Fellow in Economics and received his PhD in 1906. "The History of the British Post Office," an expansion of his doctoral thesis, was published in the *Harvard Economic Studies* in 1912.

Hemmeon was teaching economics at Illinois when he was appointed to the McGill staff in 1907. There he joined Stephen Leacock and with him constituted the whole Department for some years. He continued to be associated with Leacock until the end of the latter's teaching career in 1936, when Hemmeon succeeded him as head of the Department.

Hemmeon was Leacock's principal associate at McGill for thirty years, and yet two men could scarcely be more different from each other. Leacock, the extrovert, who enjoyed people and the limelight; Hemmeon, the introvert, shy and retiring, who loved solitude. Leacock, who relished expressing himself in speeches and writings; Hemmeon, who hated public speaking and disliked writing. Leacock, conservative in politics and outlook; Hemmeon, liberal and, in the context of the times, on some issues, a radical. But the two understood each other; they shared qualities of courage and tolerance, and Hemmeon, too, had a sense of humour.

Leacock disliked the administrative responsibilities attached to the chairmanship of a department. Hence, for the greater part of his life at McGill, Hemmeon carried this burden, as well as that of dealing with students. He discharged these tasks faithfully and conscientiously. Both colleagues and students were impressed by his analytical mind, his practical approach to problems, his dislike of sham and hypocrisy, and his dry humour.

He showed these qualities not only at McGill but also on the very rare occasions when he accepted governmental appointments. In the depression of the thirties, he represented the employees on a board of conciliation named to deal with the dispute arising from the demand of the railway companies for a 10 per cent reduction in wages. At the public hearings, his questions were searching and often sarcastic. He dissented from his colleagues and wrote a minority report which, in the climate of the times, was a tribute to his integrity.

Hemmeon's life was dedicated to teaching. His lectures were never orations. Their aim was to raise questions in the minds of the students and thereby to promote discussion. Being a sceptic, he was never dogmatic and welcomed thoughtful dissent from his views. His particular fields were politics and labour problems. Fortunate indeed was the student who shared these interests;

Hemmeon's door was always open to him and help and encouragement were never lacking.

A cynic in politics, Hemmeon had a lively interest in national and international affairs, which he retained to the end. He enjoyed a good-humoured political discussion where he could give vent to his wit and sarcasm. He was a liberal in the best sense of the word and never hesitated to show it. But he was never an optimist. He knew the frailties of human nature and the errors of statesmen and politicians did not shock him. His last letter to me closed on a typical Hemmeon note: "A weary world. We are saps of homines, not homines sapientes."

H. CARL GOLDENBERG

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

THERE has been growing concern in recent years as to the adequacy of the support now available in Canada for research by social scientists. This problem has been given earnest consideration for some time by the Social Science Research Council of Canada.

The Council, at its annual meeting on June 9 in Charlottetown, approved the appointment of Professor Mabel Timlin "to investigate and report on the financial resources and institutional arrangements now required to give adequate support to research in the social sciences in Canada in the light of developments which have taken place since the Social Science Research Council was established in 1940 and to make recommendations with respect to the role, function, structure and financing of the Social Science Research Council itself."

Professor Timlin will commence her inquiry in September 1964. She will wish to take into account the views and experience of as many Canadian social scientists as possible on these questions. Those interested are asked to write to her, c/o Social Science Research Council of Canada, 56 Sparks Street, Suite 505, Ottawa 4.