

OBITUARY

Edward Arthur George Luxton, 1914-1945

George Luxton was born June 17, 1914, in Victoria, B.C. He attended St. Michael's School, Brentwood College, and Victoria College in Victoria, and then went on to the University of British Columbia, where he secured his B.A. and B.Comm. in 1933 and 1934. Aided by a Royal Bank scholarship he took an M.A. at McGill in 1935. For the next four years he worked in Montreal, largely on investment analysis, for the Sun Life Assurance Company and the International Bond and Share Corporation. Winning a fellowship at Harvard in April, 1939, was celebrated by marrying a fellow McGill graduate, Mildred Anna Ball. He went on that fall to postgraduate work on fiscal policy and statistics at Harvard. He then joined the Research Department of the Bank of Canada in the summer of 1940, and three years later transferred to the Research and Statistics Branch of the Department of Labour as Assistant Director. After a year there he moved to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics as Chief of the Planning and Development Staff, with particular responsibility for the work on national income, and for the last several months before his tragic death in January, 1945, he shared his time between his work in the Department of Labour and the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

George Luxton's great professional contribution was to bring an expert knowledge of modern statistical technique and quantitative economic analysis to bear on the complex economic problems of the day. His technical competence, coupled with a sound understanding of economic processes and economic theory, helped greatly in forging the statistical tools and measures needed to guide the dynamic Canadian war economy. His first major job at the Bank of Canada was to set up a running summary of Canadian corporate profits which has since been further developed and helps to fill an important gap in Canadian economic data. On loan to National Selective Service almost from its beginning, he played a leading part in organizing man-power statistics and developing the present labour survey. Of outstanding importance, however, and nearest to his heart was his work in the national income field. He was early seized with the concept of national income as the keystone of the whole statistical arch, and with the new vistas of economic research and practical planning which competent national income analysis open out. His first objectives were to improve the estimates, and to present them in a form which would make them of the greatest possible utility and convenience to those responsible for formulating policy. He made notable progress in each endeavour, overhauling the theory of the whole structure, developing procedures of direct estimates to fill in gaps, and greatly expanding sampling technique. Shortly before his death he helped lay the foundation for uniform methods and comparable statistics between Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom in the national income field.

Never physically robust, and very youthful looking, George was in fact still maturing intellectually. It was a growth which would have gone on indefinitely, based as it was on an eager intellectual curiosity, fresh enthusiasm,

broad sympathies and imagination. His outlook and interests were broad and liberal, and he supported his sympathies with more than lip service, examining and attacking outmoded concepts and institutions with aggressiveness and intellectual honesty. He imbued statistics with a human spark, and a pleasant sense of humour saved him from many a pitfall. He was not ambitious in the personal sense, but he had ideals of high standard, and he drove himself conscientiously to achieve them: he liked to work through theories and to tackle things he found hard: he was excited and stimulated by discussion with someone better informed on some subject. It follows, not surprisingly, that he had an extraordinary capacity for making friends, and the confidence, respect, and devotion he inspired in those with whom he worked brought out the best in them too. Had he lived he might ultimately have chosen an academic career where he could have pursued his interest in economic and social theory, but during the war he wanted to do immediately useful jobs, and to do them well. [A. S.]

PUBLICATIONS

- "The United States and the Commonwealth" (Canadian Institute of International Affairs, *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference*, Ottawa, May 21st-22nd, 1938, Toronto, the Institute, 1938, pp. 7-27).
- "A Plan for the Use of Manpower" (*Public Affairs*, vol. VI, no. 2; special issue—*Canadian Post-War Organization*, Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University, pp. 87-91).