



Research and Reform: W.P. Thompson at the University of Saskatchewan

Richard A. Rempel

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The first biologist to establish the study of genetics in a Canadian university, W.P. Thompson was a passionate advocate of science education whose impact extended far beyond his home province of Saskatchewan. In Research and Reform, Richard Rempel brings to light the life, times, and legacy of a brilliant and influential geneticist. Born and raised in rural Ontario, Thompson's thirst for knowledge took him from a largely self-educated youth to undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of Toronto and Harvard, respectively, culminating in a successful career in the field of cytogenetics. The discoveries Thompson made working with wheat chromosomes spread across the country and brought him considerable renown within the scientific community. Research and Reform documents Thompson's revolutionary attempts to create a wheat hybrid resistant to fungal leaf rust - efforts supported by the Winnipeg Rust Laboratory, the National Research Council, and the Federal Department of Agriculture. Rempel also documents the sweeping curriculum reforms Thompson introduced to the University of Saskatchewan, first as dean of arts and sciences and later as president. Thompson's presidency demonstrated for the first time the depth of the constructive and cordial relationship that existed between Tommy Douglas's Cooperative Commonwealth Federation government and the university. Shedding light on Thompson's later years, Rempel describes how he became a key figure in the planning and establishment of Saskatchewan's 1962 Medicare legislation. An invaluable addition to the history of science and medicine in Canada, Research and Reform restores a Canadian scientist and educator to his rightful place in history.



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