MEMORIALS

FREDERIC HARRISON EDMUNDS (1898-1965)

After several weeks in a hospital, and one operation, death came gently to Harry Edmunds on Sunday morning, February 28, 1965. With it ended the early phase of a now mature and growing petroleum industry in Saskatchewan, Canada—so much was the life of Frederic Harrison Edmunds intertwined with the history of oil exploration and development in his adopted country.

He was born in the small town of Hawarden, Flintshire, North Wales, on January 27, 1898. After having served in the Special Brigade, Royal Engineers, from 1917 to 1919, when he became injured in an accident that caused permanent damage to his leg, he went to the University of Liverpool where he obtained his B.Sc. Honours in 1922 and his M.Sc. in 1923. He took a combined course in chemistry and geology, the latter under P. G. H. Boswell, the distinguished pioneer in sedimentary geology. Thus the educational foundation was laid for Edmunds’ later work in soils, glacial geology, stratigraphy, and exploration for petroleum. After graduation he started out as a chemist and geologist for a firebrick company, but in 1925 left the British Isles to settle in Canada, where he joined the Department of Soils at the University of Saskatchewan. Four years later he was transferred to become the first professor in the then newly created Geology Department.

As far as his achievements are concerned in the wide field of geological studies that he made his own, Professor Edmunds will be remembered most for his comprehension of the glacial geology of Saskatchewan, and for his part in the early development of the Lloydminster oil field. When partaking in the soil surveys during the period from 1925 to 1930, he built up a storehouse of knowledge on the surficial deposits of southern Saskatchewan. Only later in life, at the insistence of friends, he wrote on the history of deglaciation of this part of the world. But before publication he relied on lectures, field trips, supervision, and informal talks for transmitting his ideas to others, most of them his students. Similarly, his contributions to a better understanding of the Cretaceous System, and oil accumulations in rocks of that age, are mainly in notes, well logs, correlation charts, typewritten reports, and geological maps. His influence on the geological fraternity was duly acknowledged when he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a Fellow of the Geological Society (London), a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, a member of the Councils of both the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, and the Geological Association of Canada. The Provincial Government appointed him to the Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Conservation Board when that body was established in 1952, a post he held until his death.

Slight of build, afflicted with diabetes, and troubled by his heart, Professor Edmunds, nevertheless, carried on an unusually heavy work load. The door to his office was always open for staff, students, and his many friends alike. He had to use quiet evenings and Sunday mornings to get the administrative tasks done that fell on him after he became Head of the Department of Geological Sciences in 1961. Also, he never let his health interfere with his desire to travel, and made a trip around the world during his sabbatical leave in 1955–1956. He kept in contact with the many