

Guttormur J. Guttormsson

early days, to listen to him recite his poetry, of this type. Some of these selections were "Half-danarskeid" (The Race of Halfdan) where a well known farmer, by this name, especially fleet of foot, went running from Sandy Bar to Winnipeg, on some important errand, letting no obstacle detain him on the way. Another poem "The Winnipeg Icelander," half English, half Icelandic, both languages distorted, causing much merriment except to the subject. The younger generation memorized this poem, and recited it fluently.

Visiting an elderly lady, busy at her spinning wheel, but happily singing "The Toast to the Fords" to the lively tune "Hvad er svo glatt" (What is as Enjoyable). The patriotic poem, "Sveitin min," (My Community) has to be translated to do it justice, and we hope that in the future there will be many translations to open up this poetic wealth. "The Icelandic requirements of patterns both rhyme and tone colour are subtle and complex beyond anything of which the English is capable" has been stated and truly applies to many of Guttormsson's poems although they may vary in quality.

In 1938, the government of Iceland invited the poet to visit his native land. Then he was made Grand Knight of the Order of the Falcon — the highest honour bestowed by that country. Ten years later he was the recipient of the Silver Star.

In 1963, Guttormsson's second visit, at the age of 85 years, a Gold Medal was presented to him for his literary achievements, purity of language and perfect diction. That year he was made Honourary Life Member of the Icelandic League and Icelandic Canadian Club.

Those of his writings that have been published are:

1. Jon Ausfirdingur (John of the East Fjords) 1920
2. Bondadottir (Farmer's daughter) 1920
3. Gaman og Alvara (Jest and Earnest) 1930
4. Tiu Leikrit (Ten Plays) 1930
5. Hunangs Flugur (Honey Bees) 1944
6. Urvalsljod (Selected Poems) 1948
7. Subterranean Passage 1957
8. Kanada Thistill (Canada Thistle) 1959

Very few of Guttormsson's poems have been translated to date, but this would be most desirable if it can be well done, to open up this wealth to other nationalities — and thus honour our poet.

Guttormsson, being musical like his parents, organized Bands (orchestras) acting as Band Master or playing some of the instruments. Poetry and music are supposed to be related talents — in this case, how true!

On November 23, 1966, after a brief illness, Guttormur J. Guttormsson passed away at the age of 88 years, and was laid to rest in the Riverton Cemetery, beside his wife who predeceased him by a few years.

Thus they rest in the settlement where they had known sorrow and joy, and where they had lived for over 50 years.

Long may the poet's memory live in the hearts of the Icelandic people and those who have knowledge of his work, all of whom now join in paying tribute to his memory.



SVEINN THORV ALDSON, M.B.E.
1873 - 1949

Sveinn Thorv aldson came to Canada with his parents at the age of 15 years (1887), at the age of 17, this gifted young man entered public school at Gimli, when it opened (1889) and applied himself to his studies in such a way that he was soon ready to attend the Winnipeg Collegiate, and quickly qualified as a teacher. He remained in the teaching profession for 4 years. Then he enrolled at a dairy school in Winnipeg, and after completing this course opened the first creamery in the district, operated at Gimli, as well as opening a general store there. In 1906, the plant was moved to Riverton, as it was more central, and more dairy farmers were in the northern area.

Around this time, a company, under the name of Sigurdsson-Thorv aldson Co., Ltd., was formed. Mr. J. Sigurdsson, brother of Stefan Sigurdsson, general merchant at Hnausa, as the new