

THOMAS, Sir ROGER (1886 - 1960), pioneer of modern agriculture in India;

Name: Roger Thomas
Date of birth: 1886
Date of death: 1960
Spouse: Margaret Ethelwynne Thomas (née Roberts)
Parent: Sophia Thomas (née James)
Parent: Lewis Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: pioneer of modern agriculture
Area of activity: Nature and Agriculture
Author: Margaret Ethelwynne Thomas

Born 4 May 1886 at Pen-yr-ardd, Clunderwen, Pembrokeshire, the seventh of the eleven children of Lewis Thomas and Sophia (née James) his wife. He was educated at Narberth County School, and University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he gained 1st-class Honours in botany, with geology as a subsidiary subject. He was Victor Ludorum in sports, and ran for the college. Between leaving school at 16 and college, he taught as an uncertificated teacher at Pontyberem Primary and Narberth Board Schools, and at a private school in Taunton. After graduating in 1913, he was appointed a member of the Indian Agricultural Service and joined the Agricultural College of Coimbatore, South India, later becoming Deputy Director of Agriculture, Madras. In 1917 he went to Mesopotamia (now Iraq) as Deputy Director of Agricultural Research. He was a member of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, with the rank of Captain, to enable him to carry out the work. He later rose to Colonel, and became Director General of Agriculture in 1920. In 1925 he resigned from government service, and spent some time travelling in the U.S.A., Egypt, Sudan, and Mexico, studying techniques of cotton growing. In 1927 he joined the British Cotton Growing Association at Khanewal, Punjab, India. In 1931 he bought land in Sind, and commenced farming in the area newly irrigated by the Sukkur Barrage, with the wider aims of improving farming generally, and cotton in particular. In December 1944 he was appointed Minister for Agriculture, Sind Government. In 1945 due to pre-Independence political pressures he resigned, but remained as Advisor. In 1940 he was awarded the C.I.E., and in 1947 a knighthood. Both before and after World War II he was a member of numerous committees in pre-partition India, and later Pakistan. His published works include: *Planning for agriculture in India* (1944); *Drainage and reclamation of irrigated lands in Pakistan, including a report on a visit to the U.S.A. and Egypt 1949* (1949); *Report on the draft of the Pakistan five-year plan* (1956).

In 1939 he married Margaret Ethelwynne Roberts, of Ormskirk, Lancashire. They had one daughter. He died 19 September 1960 and was buried at Blaenconin Baptist Chapel, Llandysilio, Clunderwen.

Author

Margaret Ethelwynne Thomas, (1906 - 1989)

Sources

Personal knowledge

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