Morrin CollegeLiterary & Historical Society

Of Quebec City

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Unveiling of official portrait of Jean-Henri Bieler

Hung on Past Presidents wall

Born Lausanne,Switzerland 20 nov. 1892

Oldest of 5 sons

Our beloved father, grandfather ,uncle

What contribution did this remarkable man leave us.

Throughout his life, Jean served his fellow man at the highest level. For us who knew him well, he served his family faithfully, imparting to us his great sensibility, his sense of responsibility his fair play and his great intellectual qualities.

He loved his wife Raymonde , who supported him throughout his life to his dying day. Eldest of five extremely gifted boys, think of Etienne, André, Jacques ad Philippe, as a student,he set the standard eventually receiving a law degree from McGill.

In 1915 he did not hesitate to join the war effort with André and Etienne. His eyesight favoured his posting as a senior administrator of No 3 Canadian General Hospital in Boulogne.

He lived the horror of the great War and back in Montréal, he gave up an aspiring law career to become the secretary of Sir Herbert Ames, Canadian delegate to the league of Nations. The quest was on to build an international organisation which would favour dialogue and compromise amongst nations on a host of issues and dad wished to contribute to improving world order.

Jean became a key figure of the secretariat of the league and eventually, under Sir Eric Drummond, he became the chief financial officer of the league was instrumental in financing the building of the Palais des Nations and worked diligently on numerous committees to further the league’s objectives.

Unfortunately a certain Adolph Hitler and his gang did not believe in international cooperation and reconciliation and we know what happened.

Jean was kept on as a senior official till Jan 1941 when, Arther Matthewson, a McGill friend of dads, and then Finance minister of Quebec under Adélard Godbout approached him to come and head up the finance department in Quebec.

We crossed occupied France and arrived in Quebec thru New York and settled in. Two solitudes and he was comfortable in both. Jean served faithfully always as number 2 behind the finance minister for the Quebec governments of Godbout, Duplessis and Lesage.

With Jean-Claude Lessard , Jeannette Bieler’s brother in law, the President of Hydro Quebec ,he financed Hydro-Quebec, the expropriation of Shawinigan Power and other private power companies followed. He participated in the quiet revolution working closely with Lesage, who was his superior and even brought in Jacques Pariseau to help him.

Retired at age 74, he took on the Presidency of the Lit and Hist , Canada’s oldest learned society.

What characterises our beloved Jean-Henri Bieler? A man of service, of honour ,of community. He was accustomed to high society, the de Candolles, the Drummonds,the French Canadian elite, the leaders of English community of Quebec. He served great leaders of his time putting society’s progress ahead of personal gain.

He certainly contributed very significantly to the evolution of world organisation and to the progress of Quebec society between 1941-1966 and beyond here at the Lit & Hist.

He loved his family. He was an active witness of God’s presence. We love you dad and wish we could be more like you.

Marc Bieler