

# FOUR: THE MINISTRATIONS OF THE REV. MR. DRONE

## DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

### **“THE DEAN ALWAYS SHOWED THE GREATEST DELICACY OF FEELING IN REGARD TO ANY TRANSLATION”: RELIABLE INFORMATION**

Dean Drone was educated in the Greek language. It is his responsibility to translate Greek passages to English for his congregation. During one sermon, he tells the congregation “The original Greek is ‘Hoson,’ but perhaps you will allow me to translate it as equivalent to ‘Hoyon’” (79). Because the Dean defaults to the popular will of his congregation in issues of translation, he asks if they will approve of his translation. They agree.

This translation, however, is not accurate. According to Leacock scholars Russell Brown and Donna Bennet:

Both words mean ‘what,’ but to think them interchangeable would be a schoolboy error, since ‘hoson’ refers to quantity (‘what amount’) and ‘hoyon’ to quality (‘what kind’).<sup>6</sup>

This error in translation leads Gerald Lynch to conclude that:

Thus Drone’s schoolboy error proves especially revealing, since the source of all his troubles, the big church, is the direct result of his confusion of quantity and quality.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, unless there were other people educated in Greek sitting in the congregation, they would have no way of agreeing or disagreeing with the translation. They are left to trust Dean Drone’s judgment.

1. When experts offer us information, they are acting in good faith. This is how they gain public trust. However, experts can often reach conflicting interpretations. How can we ensure that the information we use is reliable?
2. The majority of the congregation approves of Dean Drone’s translation. In fact, the congregation unanimously approves of it. Is the majority always right?

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<sup>6</sup> qtd. in Lynch, Gerald. *Stephen Leacock: Humour and Humanity*. McGill-Queen’s UP, 1988, p. 90.

<sup>7</sup> Lynch, Gerald. p. 90.