

obituary

Sir James Wilfred Cook, FRS, sometime Regius Professor of Chemistry in the University of Glasgow and Vice-Chancellor of the Universities of Exeter and East Africa, died on October 21 at the age of 74.

After graduating from University College, London, Sir James became lecturer in chemistry at the Sir John Cass Technical Institute in 1920, where he obtained his PhD on the chemistry of anthracene derivatives. Sir Ernest Kennaway invited him to join the staff of the Royal Cancer Hospital in 1929, where he remained for ten years, becoming reader in pathological chemistry in 1932 and professor of chemistry in 1939. It was at this hospital that he made his outstanding contributions to cancer research, by demonstrating the carcinogenicity of polycyclic benzenoid hydrocarbons and then isolating from coal tar its main carcinogenic component. This work showed for the first time that cancer could be induced by minute quantities of a pure chemical compound. Further work revealed a correlation between structure and carcinogenicity. Cook and Kennaway were awarded the Prize of the International Union against Cancer, and Cook was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1938, in recognition for their work. In 1939 he was appointed Regius Professor of Chemistry at Glasgow, a chair which he occupied for sixteen years. While coping ably with his new

administrative duties he also found time to act as President of the Royal Institute of Chemistry from 1949–51 and as a member of the University Grants Committee from 1950–54. He continued to work on polycyclic hydrocarbons, and also carried out research in colchicine and the tropolones. In 1954 he became Principal of the University College of the South West and negotiated its conversion to the University of Exeter, becoming its first vice-chancellor in 1955. He was instrumental in bringing about the emergence of a full-blooded university. His honorary directorship of the MRC Carcinogenic Substances Research Unit, at Exeter, helped to keep him in touch with organic chemistry. Cook had always shown an interest in education in developing countries, and on retiring in 1965, became vice-chancellor of the University of East Africa. In 1974 he became Chairman of the Academic Advisory Committee of the New University of Ulster, at Coleraine, and again displayed his enthusiasm in the cohesion of a new venture. He was presented with a knighthood in 1963 and was a Davey Medallist of the Royal Society (1954).

Gustav Hertz, the German Nobel Prize winning physicist, died in East Berlin on October 30, at age of 88.

Dr Hertz, who was a nephew of Heinrich Hertz (renowned for his work

on electromagnetic waves) was educated at the Universities of Gottingen, Munich and Berlin. In 1925, he became Professor of Physics at the University of Halle, and in 1928, Director of Physics at the Berlin-Charlottenberg Technische-Hochschule. In 1934, he was obliged to resign from his academic post, since he was unwilling to take the oath of allegiance to the newly-established Nazi regime. From then on, and until the end of the war, he worked for the Siemens company, who built a special laboratory for him. At the end of the war, he went to the Soviet Union, where until 1954 he worked on the Soviet atomic bomb project. He then returned to East Germany, and taught physics at the University of Dresden, until his retirement in 1961. Hertz's Nobel Prize, which he won with Dr J. Franck in 1925, was for work on the ionisation theory of gases, which played a fundamental role in the establishing of quantum theory. During this similar period of his research activity, he also devised a diffusion method of calibrating neon isotopes. His role in the development of the Soviet atomic bomb is difficult to estimate, not only from the classified nature of the project, but also because, as Sakharov has explained, the situation was a complex one of "collective invention". The fact that Hertz was given the Lenin Prize suggests, however, that his contribution was considerable.

Vera Rich

announcements

Awards

Her Majesty the Queen has approved the recommendations made to the Council of the **Royal Society** for the three **Royal Medals** to be awarded as follows: To **E. Bullard** in recognition of his distinction as a world leader in geophysics; to **D. C. Phillips** in recognition of his solution of the three-dimensional structure of an enzyme and his contributions to the techniques of X-ray crystallography; and to **B. Wallis** in recognition of his contributions to aeronautical engineering.

Appointment

A. Alexandrov has been elected president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Reports and publications

Other Countries

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Bulletin 1395-J: The Supai Group—Subdivision and Nomenclature. By Edwin D. McKee. Pp. iii + 11. Professional Paper 437-F: Land Subsidence Due to Ground-Water Withdrawal in the Los Banos-Kettleman City Area, California, Part 2. Subsidence and Compaction of Deposits. By William B. Bull. Pp. v + 90. Professional Paper 925: Sedimentation and Tectonics in the Early Tertiary Continental Borderland of Central California. By Tor H. Nilsen and Samuel H. Clarke, Jr. Pp. iv + 64. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975.) [710]

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Water-Supply Paper 2152: Quality of Surface Waters of the United States, 1970. Part 2: South Atlantic Slope and Eastern Gulf of Mexico Basins. Pp. x + 668. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974.) \$5.45. [810]

Studia Forestalia Suecica. Nr. 123: Die Kiefern-rindenwanze, *Aradus cinnamomeus* Panz. (Hemiptera-Heteroptera), Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Lebensweise und der Forstlichen Bedeutung. Von Leo Brammanis. Pp. 81. Nr. 124: Matning Analys och Optimering av Skogsmaskiners Driftsakerhet. (Logging-machine Failure Avoidance: Identification and Measurement of Key Parameters). By Sven-Ake Axelsson. Pp. 38. Nr. 125: Produktionen i Kulturbestand av ek i Sodra

Sveige. (Yield of Oak Plantations in Southern Sweden). By Charles Carbonnier. Pp. 89. Nr. 126: The Relationship Between Self-Fertilization, Empty Seeds and Seeds Originating from Selfing as a Consequence of Polyembryony. By Dag Lindgren. P. 34. (Stockholm: Skogshogskolan, Royal College of Forestry, 1975.) [910]

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Professional Paper 786: Pleistocene Geology of the Northeast Adirondack Region, New York. By Charles S. Denny. Pp. iv + 50 + plates 1–7. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974.) \$1.45. [910]

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Water-Supply Paper 2097: Quality of Surface Waters of the United States, 1968. Part 8: Western Gulf of Mexico Basins. Pp. x + 473. \$3.45. Water-Supply Paper 2118: Surface Water Supply of the United States, 1966–70. Part 6: Missouri River Basin. Vol. 3: Missouri River Basin from Sioux City, Iowa, to Nebraska City, Nebraska. Pp. xiii + 710. \$3.45. Water-Supply Paper 2120: Surface Water Supply of the United States, 1966–70. Part 7: Lower Mississippi Basin. Vol. 1: Lower Mississippi River Basin Except Arkansas River Basin. Pp. xi + 1274. Water-Supply Paper 2127: Surface Water Supply of the United States, 1966–70. Part 10: The Great Basin. Pp. xi + 1143. \$7.35. Water-Supply Paper 2145: Quality of Surface Waters of the United States, 1969. Part 6: Missouri River Basin. Pp. xi + 441. \$3.25. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1973, 1974 and 1975.) [1010]