OBITUARIES

Prof. H. V. A. Briscoe

HENRY VINCENT AIRD BRISCOE died in London after a short illness on September 24, 1961, his seventy-third birthday. He was professor of inorganic chemistry in the University of London at the Imperial College of Science and Technology during 1932-54 and thereafter professor emeritus and Fellow of the Imperial College. Briscoe was educated first at the City of London School and then the Royal College of Science, which at the time was on the point of being incorporated within the framework of the Imperial College. He graduated with honours in chemistry and then first assisted Sir Edward Thorpe in a revision of his *Dictionary*. Although he was still a junior member of the teaching staff of the Imperial College, during the First World War he was engaged in responsible and secret work (which similarly occupied much of his time during the Second World War) and later took charge of the Organic Chemistry Department at Sir John Cass College before being appointed in 1921 to the chair of inorganic and physical chemistry at Armstrong College (now King's College), Newcastle upon Tyne. He became head of the Chemistry Department in 1925 and later served as dean of the Faculty of Science in the University of Durham. Six years following his return to the Imperial College, on the retirement of Prof. J. C. Philip, he became director of the Laboratories of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, a position he held until his retirement.

In addition to his academic positions, Briscoe had many outside interests: among other things he was the first director of the Northern Coke Research Committee's laboratory, president of the Research Association of British Paint, Colour and Varnish Manufacturers, visitor and manager of the Royal Institution of Great Britain and Ireland, vice-president of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, as well as being a member of Council and officer of the Chemical Society, and chairman of a local section of the Society of Chemical Industry. After the Second World War he was also greatly concerned with the improvement of the supply of laboratory technicians in university work and was chairman of the Imperial College Technician Training Committee, of the similar University of London Committee and of the National Joint Committee on the Recruitment and Training of Science Laboratory Technicians.

Briscoe's scientific publications cover a wide range of interests. Although his first publication in 1912 with P. W. Robertson was on the migration of the *para*-halogen atom in phenols, he afterwards moved into the inorganic and physical area. Among his earlier works were precise atomic weight determinations of vanadium, tin, thallium, boron and bromine. He considered himself a disciple of T. W. Richards and was similarly devoted to rigorous purification and the development of new methods, such as those for handling volatile hydrolysable halides. He was also aware of the possibility of the variation in isotopic ratios of materials of different geological origin, and for his studies on boron developed a flotation method for the measurement of comparative densities of boron trichloride which gave values to within about $\pm 2 \times 10^{-6}$ unit. This density method, which was

typical of Briscoe's experimental skills and ingenuity, was also applied to examine heavy water and he was among the first in Great Britain to be concerned with the use of deuterium and later oxygen-18 as tracers in exchange reactions. Briscoe also made contributions to the chemistry of rhenium oxides, halides and sulphides, and of selenium.

Throughout his career, Briscoe was much concerned with more applied aspects of chemistry and made many contributions to the knowledge of coke, paints and drying oils, on which he was an authority, purity of water, insect pests in foodstuffs, etc. During the 1930's he became very interested in the silicosis problem and hazardous industrial dusts and devised methods for collection and analysis of dust samples. For this work he was awarded the Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa Medal by the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy. Inspired by a lecture given by Langmuir at the College, and anticipating current interest by many years, he also worked with Sebba on the reduction of evaporation from water surfaces through the use of monolayers of cetyl alcohol.

Briscoe will be remembered by his colleagues and students for his approachability and kindly manner. He is survived by his wife and a son and daughter—both members of the medical profession.

G. WILKINSON

Prof. Carl Hermann

PROF. CARL HERMANN, director of the Crystallographic Institute at the University of Marburg, died unexpectedly in his sleep on September 12 at the age of sixty-three. He was a pupil of Max Born and a fellow research student with Werner Heisenberg, at Göttingen. Later he became a lecturer at Stuttgart, where he and Paul Ewald initiated the *Strukturberichte* which (with its successor *Structure Reports*) gives a detailed abstract of every known crystal structure determination, and which is a valued work of reference in every modern scientific library. He also developed, with Prof. C. Mauguin, a systematic nomenclature (now known as the Hermann-Mauguin notation) for the 230 space groups, from which the symmetry can be derived at a glance; and he travelled widely in the early 1930's, gathering material for the two volumes of the *Internationale Tabellen zur Bestimmung von Kristallstrukturen*.

Hermann and his wife Eva were guests in my home at the time when the National Socialist party doubled its strength in the General Election of June 1932, which later brought Hitler to power; and I can well remember their dismay, for they realized even then what would follow. Later, Carl Hermann refused to conform to the political conditions imposed on academic staff and he took a position as physicist at the I.G. Farbenwerke at Ludwigshafen, where he continued crystallographic research of high quality on the nature of chemical bonds and on symmetry in *n*-dimensional space. He and his wife were imprisoned throughout much of the Second World War for their increasing activities in hiding and helping innumerable Jews to escape from the terrors of Nazi persecution. Only his eminence as a scientist

and the intervention of his friends saved him from the carrying out of a death sentence; but these years left their mark on him.

In 1947 he was appointed to the new chair of crystallography in the University of Marburg and he threw himself with great energy into the teaching of the subject and into the building-up of an active research school. But he also gave much of his time to the work of the Society of Friends, of which he and his wife were members, and to efforts to promote international understanding. His presence at conferences was the more valued because of his great gift for languages; if a new language interested him, he learnt it.

The statement put out by the Rector and Senate of the University of Marburg says of him: "Carl Hermann was a man of absolute integrity, and of kindness to others which had no limit. For many years he was a member of the Disciplinary Court of the University and it was always he who tried to understand and to excuse the defendant . . .".

He is not likely to be forgotten, for he has left many friends.

KATHLEEN LONSDALE

Prof. E. Taylor Jones

THE death on September 29 of Prof. Edward Taylor Jones at the age of eighty-eight will have been noted with deep regret by the many who benefited from his unique qualities both as a teacher and research supervisor. His own education followed a pattern that was familiar at the turn of the century. His studies at University College, Bangor, and the University of Berlin were followed by a time as professor of physics at Bangor and a long period as professor of natural philosophy in the University of Glasgow, a period prolonged by the advent of war in 1939. His interests throughout his life extended over a wide field of physics and he seemed, in fact, to be equally interested in physics and in electrical engineering. Thus, his earlier researches were in the classical field of electromagnetism with special reference to the mechanism of oscillatory devices such as the singing arc, the induction coil, the Tesla coil, and the magneto.

Research into the behaviour of the induction coil may well have led to his very early attack on a variety of problems in electron diffraction. He was greatly excited by the elegant de Broglie approach to wave mechanics and soon followed the lead given by G. P. Thomson at the University of Aberdeen in his famous work on electron diffraction. This was a notable switch in interest and could have resulted in a greater volume of original work but for the limitations of means and research students of that time. Nevertheless, on average he supervised the work of some five research students throughout his active career. I myself realized, as one of his research students, that Taylor Jones made many fruitful suggestions while never stultifying the initiative of members of his team. He preferred to play the part of adviser and in this he gave freely of his store of knowledge.

He will doubtless be remembered by most as an inspired teacher of the very large ordinary classes. These seemed to fascinate him. He took great pains to make his courses lively and even at times hilarious, obviously believing that above all interest must be generated. His extremely expert clowning in some of his demonstrations made it inconceivable that an

understanding of the fundamentals should be beyond any student. In spite of this unique approach to his ordinary classes there was considerable discipline in his handling of classes of more than two hundred students. With the advanced classes he was content to follow more orthodox patterns of instruction. He must have roused within many a life-long interest in physics by his vivid proof that science could be fun.

Prof. Taylor Jones had many publications to his credit and the list of these shows his versatility and widely ranging interests. Physics made startling advances throughout his life and he was excited by many of them. He did not confine his research interests closely and he never looked with favour on team-work. In this respect he belonged with the individualists of his earlier period. Those who knew him as a friend realized how fully he enjoyed his life spent in physical science.

S. C. CURRAN

Dr. Madeline Kerr

It was with deep regret that the colleagues and friends of Dr. Madeline Kerr learned of her death on August 22, a few months after she had resigned from her post of senior lecturer in social science in the University of Liverpool because of ill-health.

Dr. Kerr was primarily a social psychologist, but the richness and variety of her interests in the cultural process took her work into the sociological and anthropological fields. Dr. Kerr graduated at Manchester and, after working in the Psychological Service of the Liverpool Education Committee, returned to take up the Knight fellowship in psychological medicine. At Manchester she was influenced by Prof. T. H. Pear and retained an interest in the interaction of social status and personality traits. From Manchester she went to London, where she took her doctorate and worked with Prof. Lancelot Hogben. She then joined Prof. Susan Stebbing to teach psychology in the Department of Philosophy at Bedford College. She was a great admirer of Susan Stebbing and this was reflected in the logical austerity of her seminar teaching.

In 1947 Dr. Kerr was given leave of absence to act as social psychologist to the West Indian Social Survey, where she organized a programme of psychological testing. In the West Indies, Dr. Kerr found an environment in which her interests in the graphic and plastic arts and in music combined with her scientific interests to make her immediately acceptable to the subjects of her study, and she made lasting friendships with members of all classes in West Indian society from simple peasants to members of the Government. Some of the findings of her work were published in *Personality and Conflict in Jamaica* (1952).

On her return to England it was natural that she should join Prof. T. S. Simey, who had also worked in the West Indies, in the Department of Social Science of the University of Liverpool. Here she continued her intensive investigation on families, and in 1958 published *The People of Ship Street*, which described the existence of a matriarchal society in a working-class area of Liverpool.

In Liverpool she devoted most of her energies and her great enthusiasm to her students, for whom nothing was too much trouble and with whom she made close and enduring friendships. She will be greatly missed.

D. CHAPMAN