

obituary

Professor Thomas A. Bennet-Clark, CBE, FRS died peacefully after a long illness on November 24, 1975. He was born in Edinburgh in 1903 and educated at Marlborough College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where, under the inspiration of F. F. Blackman, he switched from Chemistry to Botany, and won the Frank Smart prize (1923). He started research under Blackman but after a year moved to Trinity College, Dublin, to become research assistant to H. H. Dixon. From 1930 to his retirement in 1967, he held University posts in Manchester, Nottingham, Kings College, London and East Anglia.

Blackman's influence on Bennet-Clark can be seen in his early contribution to plant metabolism, but he went beyond the essentially analytical work of Blackman. Whereas Blackman's analysis of the Pasteur effect in apples made no reference to foreign research, Bennet-Clark was quick to recognise the deep significance of Meyerhof's work on muscles. Bennet-Clark's work on metabolism was a landmark and initiated a series of investigations leading from those of Meirion Thomas on CO₂ fixation to the present recognition of the underlying biochemical unity in the organic acid metabolism of succulents and C₄ plants.

The six years spent with Dixon were particularly happy years. The work at Dublin on cell membranes and permeability led to a study of osmotic relations. This work raised the possibility of the active uptake of water, which excited much interest and inspired a great deal of experimentation in plant biophysics.

Bennet-Clark adapted filter paper chromatography for the assay of activators and inhibitors of plant growth. This work initiated an important series of investigations on plant hormones particularly involving the work of Wain and Wareing. His work on diageotropism (in collaboration with Sir Nigel Ball) did not lead to major developments in plant physiology. The experiments do, however, reveal great ingenuity and originality, and should be read by all young plant physiologists.

Bennet-Clark's contribution to Plant Physiology was highly original but its quantity was not large. Partly this was due to his high regard for quality, partly due to limited facilities, but most of all due to his unselfishness. He was full of ideas, his quick mind produced lateral thoughts at an alarming rate, few, however, were tested experimentally because he would not use his great influence in the ARC and in other quarters to fund his personal researches. This was undoubtedly a

mistake, but given Bennet-Clark's character, it was inevitable.

He was a gentle, kind man with a wry sense of humour and a charming eccentricity which endeared him to the hearts of his students and colleagues. He always found time to help those in difficulty and his advice on both scientific and personal matters was appreciated by many. He was an outstanding teacher and lecturer. He liked to pretend that he knew little taxonomy, but his encyclopaedic mind contained a stock of information on taxonomy and many other topics which were subject to instant recall and association in novel ways.

Bennet-Clark contributed greatly to the success of the Society for Experimental Biology and the Journal of Experimental Botany, of which he was the first editor. His scientific achievements were recognised by his election to the Royal Society in 1950 and his work for the Agricultural Research Council was recognised by the award of a C.B.E. The association of the Food Research Institute and the John Innes Institute with the University of East Anglia is a monument to Bennet-Clark. But his colleagues will remember above all his great personal qualities. We loved him and mourn his passing.

D. Davies

announcements

International meetings

March 29–April 2, **Atomic and molecular physics conference**, Belfast (The meetings Officer, The Institute of Physics, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1 8QX, UK).

March 31–April 2, **Intermediate moisture food**, Weybridge, Surrey (The Secretary, National College of Food Technology, St George's Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0DE, UK).

Reports and publications

Other countries

The Politics and Responsibility of the North American Breadbasket. By Lester R. Brown. (Worldwatch Paper No. 2.) Pp. 43. (Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 1975.) [1011]

Mass Emergencies, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1975. Edited by J. Nehnevajsa and E. Quarantelli. (An International Journal of Theory, Planning and Prac-

tice.) Pp. 1–86. Published quarterly Annual subscription Dfl. 86; \$36.75. (Amsterdam: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, 1975.) [101]

History of Antarctic Exploration and Scientific Investigation. Plates and Bibliography Compiled by the American Geographical Society. (Antarctic Map Folio Series. Folio 19.) Pp. 6+15 plates. (New York: American Geographical Society, 1975.) \$15 plus \$1 postage and handling. [1011]

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Professional Paper 763: Stratigraphy of the Inyan Kara Group and Localisation of Uranium Deposits, Southern Black Hills, South Dakota and Wyoming. By Garland B. Troy, Don E. Wolcott and C. Gilbert Bowles. Pp. iv+57+4 plates. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974.) \$5.10 [1111]

United States Department of Agriculture. Index-Catalogue of Medical and Veterinary. Supplement 20, Part 1, Authors—A to Z. By Judith H. Shaw, et al. Pp. xvi+558. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975.) \$6.15. [1211]

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Professional Paper 456–1: Geology of the Arabian Peninsula, Jordan. By Friedrich Bender. Pp. vi+36+3 plates. Professional Paper 835: Quaternary Geology of Alaska. By Troy L. Péwé. Pp. v+145+plate 1. Professional Paper 876: Caudron Subsidence of Oligocene Age at Mount Lewis, Northern Shoshone Range, Nevada. By Chester T. Wrucke and Miles L. Silberman. Pp. iii+20. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975.) [1311]

Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute. Annual Report for 1974. Pp. 76+15 statistical tables. (Reduit: Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, 1975.) [1411]

United States Department of the Interior: Geo-

logical Survey. Professional Paper 918: Lithium in Unconsolidated Sediments and Plants of the Basin and Range Province, Southern California and Nevada. By Helen L. Cannon, Thelma F. Harms and J. C. Hamilton. Pp. iii+23. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975.) [1411]

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Bulletin 1384: Aeromagnetic and Limited Gravity Studies and Generalized Geology of the Bodie Hills Region, Nevada and California. By F. J. Kelnhampl, W. E. Davis, M. L. Silberman, C. W. Chesterman, R. H. Chapman and C. H. Gray, Jr. Pp. iv+38; plate 1. Bulletin 1385-C: Mineral Resources of the San Pedro Parks Wilderness and Vicinity, Rio Arriba and Sandoval Counties, New Mexico. By Elmer S. Santor, Robert B. Hall and Robert C. Weisner. Pp. vi+29+plate 1. Bulletin 1391-C: Mineral Resources of the Clear Creek-Upper Big Deer Creek Study Area, Contiguous to the Idaho Primitive Area, Lemhi County, Idaho. By Fred W. Cater, Darrell M. Pinckney and Ronald B. Stotelmeyer. Pp. vi+41. Bulletin 1394-E: The Auld Lang Syne Group, of Late Triassic and Jurassic(?) Age, North-Central Nevada. By D. B. Burke and N. J. Silberling. Pp. iii+14. 35 cents. Professional Paper 851: Soil Slips, Debris Flows, and Raintorms in the Santa Monica Mountains and Vicinity, Southern California. By Russell H. Campbell. Pp. iv+51. Professional Paper 871: Lithology and Origin of Middle Ordovician Calcareous Mudmound at Meiklejohn Peak, Southern Nevada. By Reuben James Ross, Jr., Valdar Jaanusson and Irving Friedman. Pp. iv+48. Professional Paper 886: Post-Carboniferous Stratigraphy, Northeastern Alaska. By R. L. Determan, H. N. Reiser, W. P. Brosge and J. R. Dutro, Jr. Pp. iii+46. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975.) [1711]