

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PURE AND APPLIED CHEMISTRY

COMMISSION ON GEOCHEMISTRY

THE Commission on Geochemistry of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry held a meeting in Munich during August 26-27, during the twentieth Conference of the Union. Attending the meeting were the following members of the Commission: Prof. T. F. W. Barth (*president*), Dr. F. M. Vokes (*acting secretary*), Prof. C. Burri, Prof. C. W. Correns, Prof. S. I. Tomkeieff, Prof. L. R. Wager, Prof. F. E. Wickman and three observers of the Commission: Prof. A. P. Vinogradov, Prof. K. Sugawara and Prof. E. Ingerson.

The Commission discussed at length its future objects and aims, particularly with regard to the work of its sub-committees. The chairmen of the three existing sub-committees reported on their activities; these comprise the subcommittee on abstracting, translation and information; the subcommittee on the chemistry of the oceans and the subcommittee on rock analyses. It was decided to broaden the scope and work of the Commission by forming sub-committees on "the organic compounds in the crust of the Earth" and "the beginning of the biosphere".

It was also considered highly desirable that some form of code should be compiled which could be used to indicate the exact analytical methods which had been employed in mineral and rock analyses reported in publications. It was decided to seek the co-operation of the Sections of Inorganic and Analytical Chemistry of the Union to further this end. The question of education and training for geochemistry was also discussed at some length. In particular, it was agreed that the education committee of the Geochemistry Society should be encouraged to produce a definitive report on this subject as a basis for further discussion.

The subject of future symposia on geochemistry came in for a considerable amount of discussion. It was decided to offer the Commission's co-operation in respect of the proposed symposium of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics to be held in Helsinki in July 1960, and that of the Geochemical Society to be held in Copenhagen in August 1960. For the Copenhagen symposium it was suggested that the Commission should be responsible for organizing a section of the geochemistry of sedimentary carbonate rocks.

Prof. A. P. Vinogradov of the Vernadsky Institute of Moscow gave the members present a short summary of the current geochemical work being carried out at the Institute. He also mentioned that discussions were taking place regarding the formation of a Russian geochemical society which he hoped would in time be able fully to co-operate with similar bodies outside Russia. Prof. K. Sugawara also gave a short account of the position and activities of the Japanese Geochemical Society.

Election of Members. In order to replace those members due to retire at the end of the present year, the following were elected members of the Commission: Prof. L. H. Ahrens, Prof. E. Ingerson, Prof. K. Sugawara and Prof. A. P. Vinogradov. The officers elected for the session beginning 1960 were: *President*, Prof. C. W. Correns (Göttingen); *Vice-President*, Prof. A. P. Vinogradov (Moscow); and *Secretary*, Prof. E. Ingerson (Austin, Texas). In addition, it was decided to invite seven new observers to serve with the Commission. The president-elect, Prof. Correns, proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring president, Prof. Barth, for his work for the Commission during his term of office and this was carried with acclamation.

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

THE fourth annual conference of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science was held during September 25-27 at Newnham College, Cambridge, and was attended by about eighty members and guests. Dr. M. B. Hesse was conference secretary.

Four symposia were held: "Scientific Research and the Philosophy of Science", "Biology and Physics", "Classification, Concept-formation and Language", and "Knowing and Being".

At the first session, with Dr. J. O. Wisdom in the chair, it was argued whether 'philosophy of science' can be held to refer to any activity not properly subsumed under 'scientific research', and, if it can, whether that activity is relevant to research. Prof. H. Dingle mentioned various questions of value and purpose, as well as of method, papers on which were unlikely to be accepted for publication in journals concerned with particular sciences. Prof. H. C. Longuet-Higgins, on the other hand, argued that, of the product of philosophers of science, part was science, part was philosophy, and the remainder was

of no use to man or scientist. This aroused some consternation, as members consulted their own credentials and invoked those of others, but in due course a consensus emerged that scientists have to think critically about their thinking, and the comparative study of modes of scientific thought may help them to do so.

In the second session, Prof. J. H. Woodger described an abstractive hierarchy of terms characterized by a one-many relation, and its use as a conceptual framework in biology. With some hierarchies of cells, every cell is a distinct life; with others, only the first cell in each hierarchy, elaboration occurring on subsequent levels. Morphology was the study of the arrangement and differentiation of parts; physiology was the study of the existential dependence of parts. Genetics was concerned with the process in which the first member of a hierarchy results from the conjunction of two members of other hierarchies. Dr. E. M. Hutten set alongside this framework the sequence exhibited by radioactive