

little enough time to continue theoretical work on phyllotaxis; work he only resumed after his retirement.

But as a teacher, although his subject was specialized, van Iterson attracted many students to his lectures which went far beyond the official specifications of his chair. His practical courses were also models of instruction. In addition his laboratory was an active centre of research on a great variety of problems, usually with relation to industrial plants or their products, but not infrequently of a purely botanical nature—for example, his work on the extension growth of young cells. About 160 publications by van Iterson and his students and colleagues emerged from his laboratory including 22 doctoral theses.

Van Iterson was not content, however, with creating his own subject and teaching it. He soon realized that if the knowledge he disseminated was to bear fruit in the long run, it needed close ties with industries and development companies. His ultimate aim was to convince industrialists of the value of scientific research.

The rubber industry was the first to receive his attention. In 1910, on van Iterson's instigation, the government decided to establish an advisory service for the rubber trade and industry. The service was started with the appointment of one of van Iterson's assistants and housed in a room in his small laboratory. After several years of extensive activity a similar advisory service was started in 1919 for the textile and papermaking industries. He encouraged research on wood, and did a difficult task in reorganizing in the Netherlands East Indies the experimental station for the so-called upland cultures.

Finally, in 1924, van Iterson also became a member of a small committee to advise the government on

how to ensure that scientific research benefited the public. The recommendations of the committee resulted in the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO). Van Iterson became a member, and subsequently president, of the executive committee. Today this organization employs some 4,000 people in industrial or governmental research, and its many subdivisions include institutes for rubber, fibres and wood—continuations of van Iterson's earlier initiatives.

It is remarkable that van Iterson's membership of numerous committees in industrial and public organizations did not affect the meticulousness with which he performed his university duties. In addition he was a member of many learned societies, serving on the board of a number of them, including the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences, the Biological Council and the Chemical Council of the Netherlands. He was a honorary doctor of the University of British Columbia and he earned two royal distinctions.

There are several lines leading from van Iterson to England. In particular Dr Ir. A. Wijnberg, his first graduate, who demonstrated the possibility of recovering on a commercial scale the hard wax present in the waste press cakes from cane sugar factories, and subsequently became one of the founders of the beet sugar industry in Britain. Further, van Iterson, though 20 years his junior, was a good friend of Sir d'Arcy Wentworth Thompson who sometimes visited him at his home in Delft. Finally, van Iterson, realizing the possibilities of X-ray diffraction for the resolution of fine structure in natural products, sought contacts with X-ray crystallographers in England working in biological fields, in particular W. T. Astbury and R. D.

Preston of the University of Leeds. As a result Delft physicists were encouraged to develop X-ray facilities for use by investigators in different fields, and van Iterson initiated research which gave new insights into the wax coatings of plants, the molecular organization of starch grains, and the cell walls of lower plants.

Van Iterson was careful and straightforward in conversation, and a good listener with a critical but warm sense of humour and unbounded energy. After retiring in 1948 van Iterson continued his personal research until, fifteen years later, declining health forced him to stop. His death is a great loss to all those who gained from his gifts as a leader, a scientist and an organizer.

## Announcements

### University News

**Dr Robert L. Wildey**, US Geological Survey Center of Astrogeology, has been appointed associate professor of astrophysics and astronomy at **Northern Arizona University**.

**Dr I. D. Cooke**, Welsh National School of Medicine, has been appointed to the chair of obstetrics and gynaecology in the **University of Sheffield** and **Mr P. H. Burke**, United Cambridge Teaching Hospitals, has been appointed professor of dental health.

## Appointments

**Mr D. J. Barron**, chairman of Rowntree Mackintosh Limited, has been appointed to membership of the **University Grants Committee**.

### HOW TO BUY NATURE

Volumes start in January, March, May, July, September and November, but subscriptions may begin at any time.

The direct postal price per subscription is:

**12 MONTHS\*** (52 issues per title)

	Surface mail UK and worldwide	U.S.A. and Canada
Nature (Friday)	£14	\$48
Nature+		
Nature Physical Science	£24	\$83
Nature+		
Nature New Biology	£24	\$83
All three editions	£29.50	\$108
Annual Index	£1	\$3

\*Rates for shorter periods *pro rata* (minimum three months)  
(Charge for delivery by air mail on application)

### Editorial and Publishing Offices of NATURE

MACMILLAN JOURNALS LIMITED  
4 LITTLE ESSEX STREET, LONDON WC2R 3LF  
Telephone Number: 01-836 6633. Telegrams: Phusis London WC2R 3LF  
Telex: 262024

711 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20004  
Telephone Number: 202-737 2355. Telex: 64280

#### Subscription Department

MACMILLAN JOURNALS LIMITED  
BRUNEL ROAD, BASINGSTOKE, HANTS  
Telephone Number: Basingstoke 29242

#### American display advertisements

NATURE SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS INC.  
711 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING  
WASHINGTON DC 20004

#### All other advertisements

T. G. SCOTT & SON, LIMITED.  
1 CLEMENT'S INN, LONDON WC2A 2ED  
Telephone 01-242 6264/01-405 4743  
Telegrams: Textualist London WC2A 2ED

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office

Copyright © Macmillan Journals Limited, June 9 1972