

# obituary

**Detlev Wulf Bronk** died at New York Hospital on November 17, 1975 from complications following a stroke. He was 78 years old. Bronk was one of the outstanding leaders of science in the United States, and his influence also reached out far into the international scene. In the course of his career, he was active and well-known in scientific organisations in Europe, Asia, and Latin America as well as North America.

His initial scientific interest was in electrical engineering and physics, but he soon became committed to biological problems. As a National Research Council (NRC) fellow in the late 1920s, he worked with A. V. Hill at the University of London on studies of the production of heat in muscles and with Edgar Douglas Adrian, now Baron Adrian of Cambridge, on the development of techniques of recording the electrical activity of single nerve fibres.

Because of these interests, he was appointed director of the newly established Eldridge Reeves Johnson Foundation for Medical Physics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1929. This remained his base until he left to become president of The Johns Hopkins University in 1949.

During World War II, he became involved in aviation medicine based on a combination of prior interests, which included a period as a naval air cadet in 1917-18. This activity not only carried him to a number of theatres of combat

but involved him in a variety of applied scientific enterprises which made it natural for him to assume the chairmanship of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) at the end of the war. At that time the Council was the major working arm of the Academy.

In 1950, he was elected president of the NAS, where he spent a substantial fraction of his time participating as a leader in the very rapid development of science in the United States that accompanied the great growth of government investment in science following World War II. In this connection he served as a member of the National Science Board of the National Science Foundation for fourteen years and was its chairman between 1956 and 1964.

In 1953, he was asked to become head of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, on whose board he had served since 1946. He accepted this post with the understanding that he would be in a position to develop a graduate program in parallel to the postdoctorate educational program which the Institute had supported since its creation early in the century. The Institute eventually changed its name to The Rockefeller University—the first purely graduate university in the United States. He retired as president of Rockefeller University in 1968, but remained exceedingly active in national and international scientific affairs up to the time of his death. In fact, his illness, which came

upon him quite suddenly, took place just a few weeks after his return from the Soviet Union, where he had participated, as a foreign member, in the 250th anniversary celebration of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Detlev Bronk was one of the most honoured scientists of our time, having participated and received almost all of the awards in almost all of the activities that lay within his sphere of professional concern. Those who knew him well and worked with him, however, admired him most for his intense interest in individuals as such. He had an enormous circle of close friends and the gift of bringing them together into effective working partnership on countless occasions. This ability served the interests of the NAS exceedingly well, since he employed it, in a most remarkable way, to make that organisation a highly effective advisor both at home and abroad.

Closely related to his interest in people was a profound conviction that the pursuit of science has its own intrinsic rewards which are reflected in its influence on human enlightenment. He understood quite clearly that, while science could serve as handmaiden to the applied arts, it must not become a slave to them. He believed deeply that the freedom of science is one of the essential freedoms which must be sustained if mankind is to become a more perfect reflection of the Creator.

**Frederick Seitz**

## announcements

### Appointment

**Professor R. N. Hazeldine, F.R.S.**, Head of the department of Chemistry at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, has been appointed to succeed **Lord Bowden** as Principal of UMIST in September 1976.

### Reports and publications

#### Other countries

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Professional Paper 914: Geologic Considerations for Redevelopment Planning of Managua, Nicaragua, following the 1972 Earthquake. By Henry R. Schmoll, Richard D. Krushensky and Ernest Dobrovoly. Pp. iii + 23. Professional Paper 907-A,B. Grade and Tonnage Relationships Among Copper Deposits. By D. A. Singer, Dennis P. Cox and Lawrence J. Drew. *and* Geochemical Exploration Techniques Applicable in the Search for Copper Deposits. By Maurice A. Chaffee. (Geology and Resources of Copper Deposits) Pp. vii + A11; iii + B26. (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975.) [512]

### Person to Person

Scientist going on sabbatical leave to Stanford would like to exchange houses with someone in the Stanford area. House near St Albans, within easy reach of London, has 3 bedrooms, central heating, garage and schools nearby. Available about mid-August 1976 for 12 months. (Dr G. R. Banks, National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill, London NW7 1AA.)

There will be no charge for this service. Send items (not more than 60 words) to Martin Goldman at the London office. The section will include exchanges of accommodation, personal announcements and scientific queries. We reserve the right to decline material submitted. No commercial transactions.

United States Department of the Interior: Geological Survey. Water-Supply Paper 1827-B: Reactions of Aqueous Aluminum Species at Mineral Surfaces. By D. W. Brown and J. D. Hem. Pp. iv + 48. Water-Supply Paper 2109: Surface Water Supply of the United States, 1966-70. Part 3: Ohio River Basin. Vol. 3: Ohio River Basin from Louisville, Kentucky, to Wabash River. Pp. viii + 633. Water-Supply Paper 2150: Quality of Surface Waters of the United States, 1969. Parts 12-16: North Pacific Slope Basins, Alaska, Hawaii, and Other Pacific Areas. Pp. xiii + 480. \$3.50. Professional Paper 712-C: Hydrogeologic and Hydrochemical Framework, South-Central Great Basin, Nevada-California, with Special Reference to the Nevada Test Site. By Isaac J. Winograd and William Thordarson. Pp. vii + 126 + 3 plates. Professional Paper 756: Middle Jurassic (Bajocian) Ammonites from Eastern Oregon. By Ralph W. Inlay. Pp. iv + 100 + 47 plates. \$2.50. Professional Paper 843-A: Distribution of Gold and Other Ore-Related Bodies in the Oxidized Zone at Goldfield, Nevada. By R. P. Ashley and J. P. Albers. Pp. iii + 48 + 4 plates. Professional Paper 878: Evaluation of Ground-Water Degradation Resulting from Waste Disposal to Alluvium near Barstow, California. By Jerry L. Hughes. Pp. iv + 33. Professional Paper 888: Tectonic Studies of the Berkshire Massif, Western Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont. Pp. iii + 106. (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1974 and 1975.) [812]

Bracteatum: a Potential Domestic Source of Codeine. Pp. 16. (St. Louis, Missouri: Mallinckrodt, Inc., 1975.) [812]