

from the "Ecole de Chemie et Physique" of Paris, the school made illustrious by some of the greatest French physicists, among them Pierre Curie and Paul Langevin. In 1912 he became assistant to Madame Curie, and since that time all his activity was connected with the Curie Laboratory, which he helped to organize.

Holweck's thesis for the degree of science doctor was the well-known study on soft x-rays, which bridged the gap in our knowledge between the far ultraviolet region and x-rays. This study is a classic which still supplies most of the available information on the x-ray spectra of the elements of low atomic number. In the course of this research, Holweck's interest had been directed to the problem of high vacuum production: the result was the design of the Holweck molecular pump, the most powerful vacuum-producing device prior to the invention of the vapor diffusion pumps. Other of his important achievements in the field of applied physics are: the Holweck gravimetric pendulum, a tool that proved of the utmost utility in the oil survey technique; a high power radio tube which could be disassembled, and the first x-ray tube with successive stages of acceleration. Moreover, during research on television, he was among the first to develop the use of the focusing of electrons and to pioneer the developments of electron optics.

Through his lifelong friendship with Dr. A. Lacassagne, now head of the Pasteur Laboratory of the Institute of Radium, Holweck became interested in radiobiology. In 1929 he rediscovered, independently of previous work by Crowther, the quantum interpretation of the biological action of radiation on microorganisms. In the following years he made fundamental contributions in this field with studies on bacteria, fungi and viruses.

During the first World War, Dr. Holweck had substantially contributed to the application of science to defense, by studying with Langevin and Chilowsky the detection of submarines by means of ultrasonic waves. From the onset of the second World War until the defeat of France, he was actively engaged in defense work, and obtained some of the finest results achieved by French scientists in this field.

Less known than his personal achievements are Holweck's contributions to most of the research that

was performed in the Curie Laboratory since its foundation. His tremendous skill as an experimenter (he was a man for whom technical difficulties just "did not exist") and his sympathetic disposition made him the willing adviser of all the scientific workers in his entourage. Many an important research was made possible by his uncanny ability to discover the way out of some technical bottleneck. Moreover, it is not an exaggeration to state that he contributed more than anybody else to the systematization of the radioactive technique, which was created in the Curie Laboratory and spread thence throughout the world.

With the exception of painting, for which he had a particular gift, Holweck's hobbies were mainly scientific. An amateur astronomer, he had built in his Paris home a complete observatory equipped with a 10-inch telescope, a source of admiration and envy of many professional astronomers. He was about to publish a study on certain peculiarities of Jupiter's satellites.

The privilege of collaborating with Holweck enabled the writers to appreciate not only his inspiring personality and deep humanity, but also the inflexible independence of his character. This independence was perhaps responsible for the fact that his ability was not always duly recognized. It is easy to imagine that such a man would refuse not only collaboration, but even obedience to the iniquitous Nazi rule in France. He has paid with his life for his love for freedom and for his country. His example will inspire all scientists of the world in their fight for the cause of liberty and democracy.

S. ROSENBLUM

S. E. LURIA

RECENT DEATHS

DR. ROSS A. GORTNER, chief of the division of biochemistry of the University of Minnesota, died on September 30. He was fifty-seven years old.

DR. WILLIAM COLEMAN STURGIS, from 1905 to 1914 dean of the School of Forestry of Colorado College, previously, from 1891 to 1901, connected with the Connecticut Agricultural Station, and for ten years educational secretary of the Board of Missions of the Episcopal Church of New York, died on September 29 in his eightieth year.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

EMERGENCY BASE HOSPITALS

SELECTED hospitals and medical schools in the coastal states have been invited by the Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service to organize affiliated staff units which will be ready to serve when needed

to supplement the medical staffs of Emergency Base Hospitals, now being designated by the Medical Division of the Office of Civilian Defense. These units resemble the affiliated hospital units of the Army except that they are smaller in size. They are being organ-

ized in order to assure suitable status and remuneration for physicians who may be called upon in the event of an enemy attack in their locality to care for casualties and other patients who have been evacuated to the interior of their region.

The designation of Emergency Base Hospitals and the formation of affiliated units are part of a joint hospital program of the Medical Division of the Office of Civilian Defense and the U. S. Public Health Service. The program is authorized under an agreement concluded on March 2, 1942, between the Federal Security Administrator and the director of the Office of Civilian Defense.

Physicians in the affiliated units will be commissioned in the inactive Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service. Unless an urgent need for their services should arise, they will remain on an inactive status for the duration of the war. They will be called to active service only if hospitals in their regions must be evacuated and the civilian populations must be moved because of military necessity. Activation of the units will take place by order of the Surgeon General at the request of the Chief Medical Officer of the Office of Civilian Defense on advice of the Regional Medical Officer and the State Chief of Emergency Medical Service in charge of the affected areas.

The commissions will be in grades ranging from Passed Assistant Surgeon to Senior Surgeon, and when units are activated, these officers will have the rank, pay and allowances equivalent to those of officers in the armed forces.

Institutions invited to form units are asked to nominate an outstanding physician or surgeon as Unit Director, who, if he meets the physical and other requirements, will be commissioned Senior Surgeon in the Public Health Service Reserve. The Unit Director will then nominate the remainder of the staff and appointments will be made after clearance through the State Chief of Emergency Medical Service. Nominations are to be limited to male physicians over 45 years of age, to those under that age who have physical disabilities which disqualify them for military service but which do not interfere with their professional activities, and to women physicians.

In order to avoid serious depletion of the professional staffs in the medical schools and hospitals of the target areas, the Surgeon General has recommended that medical schools draw their affiliated units in part from associated hospitals and that non-teaching hospitals invite physicians from other qualified hospital staffs to collaborate.

THE NATIONAL REGISTRY OF RARE CHEMICALS

THE National Registry of Rare Chemicals, Armour Research Foundation, Thirty-third, Federal and Dear-

born Streets, Chicago, receives requests for sources of certain chemicals at a rate of approximately two hundred and fifty per month.

Dr. Martin H. Heeren, director of the registry, sends a list of chemicals for which no source is known to the registry. If any reader has one or more in his laboratory, he is urged to communicate with the registry. Even small amounts are important, inasmuch as all requested chemicals are to be used for experimental purposes only.

1. Diamino acetone
2. Myosin
3. Dysprosium
4. Luetecium
5. Terbium
6. Divinyl Benzene
7. Mercuric Fluoride
8. 3-Pyridine Acetic Acid
9. Glucose-1-Phosphate
10. Hexose-6-Phosphate
11. Acetyl Phosphate
12. Phosphoglyceraldehyde
13. Blood Charcoal
14. Alpha-Phosphoglycerol
15. d-3-Phosphoglyceraldehyde
16. d-3-Phosphoglyceric Acid
17. Alpha-Ketoglutaric Acid
18. Quinone Dioxime Dimethyl Ether
19. Diquinoyl Dioxime
20. Diquinoyl Tetroxime

THE OFFICE OF TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

A COMMITTEE of engineers and scientific men has been appointed by Chairman Donald M. Nelson to determine the manner in which the projected Office of Technical Development should be set up within the War Production Board, and to define the scope, functions and method of operations which the office should have.

Decision to establish such an office was made earlier, following a report by a previous committee recommending that the War Production Board set up a strong scientific and technical organization to make sure that the nation's technical ability and resources were utilized to the full in the war production program.

The chairman of the new committee is Webster N. Jones, director of the College of Engineering of the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburgh. Other members are:

Dr. Lawrence W. Bass, director of research, New England Industrial Research Foundation, Boston.

Dr. Oliver E. Buckley, president, Bell Telephone Laboratories, New York.

Colonel Clarence E. Davies, Ordnance Department, U. S. Army, Washington.