



Professor S. J. FOLLEY, Ph.D., D.Sc. (Manchester);
Hon. Dr Vet. Med. (Ghent); F.R.S.

Obituary

Professor S. J. Folley, Ph.D., D.Sc., Manchester; Hon. Dr Vet. Med., Ghent; F.R.S.

Professor S. J. Folley, F.R.S., died at the age of 64 on 29 June 1970 after a short illness. The National Institute for Research in Dairying has lost in him an eminent scientist whose distinguished career did much to enhance its reputation throughout the world. He graduated at Manchester University in 1927 and spent his early post-graduate years in the Departments of Physiology and Biochemistry of Liverpool University. He came to the Institute in 1932. Only recently he outlined his career at the Institute in a short article in the N.I.R.D. Biennial Reviews 1970. As he himself tells, he came to a Physiology Department which then "occupied a converted back bedroom in the Manor House"; at that time its staff consisted of a biochemist and a technical assistant. Professor Folley became Head of the Physiology Department in 1945; under his guidance the department rapidly expanded and in recent years its staff, including visiting workers, has at times exceeded 50.

Early in his career Professor Folley became interested in the endocrine control of lactation and, in particular, in the role of the hormones of the thyroid and anterior pituitary. During the Second World War he and his staff carried out extensive studies on the hormonal induction of mammary growth and lactation in sterile heifers and cows using synthetic oestrogens. These investigations led to more detailed and fundamental studies on the control of mammary growth and lactation in a number of species, and especially in the goat which proved to be an excellent experimental animal. Later, his interests turned towards neuroendocrine relationships, the physiology of the milk-ejection reflex, the assay of oxytocin in blood and factors affecting the release of prolactin and other hormones from the anterior pituitary. He was also greatly interested in the biochemistry of milk synthesis and pioneered early studies on the role of blood acetate as a substrate for the biosynthesis of milk fatty acids. Later, much research in his department was directed to the study of mammary enzymes and to the synthesis of lactose.

The outstanding importance of his work received wide recognition. He was awarded the degree of D.Sc. by his university in 1940 and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1951. In 1938 he was a Rockefeller Research Fellow at Yale University and in 1953 he was appointed Visiting Professor at the Collège de France where he gave a series of lectures which were later published in French, English and Russian. In 1964 he was given the title of Research Professor in Reading University and in the same year he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Ghent. In 1969 he was presented with the Dale Medal of the Society for Endocrinology.

As a scientist he was original and resourceful and ideas flowed from his fertile mind. He had an infectious enthusiasm and the exhortation to 'drive on' became rapidly known to newcomers to his department. His enthusiasm was, however,

tempered by a keen criticism and he had little patience with the slipshod experiment or careless piece of writing. Professor Folley was beset with serious health problems throughout his career and in recent years he suffered from almost complete blindness. His success is an outstanding tribute to his great courage in meeting and overcoming these crises. The devotion of his wife Mary was a source of great strength and encouragement to him. She accompanied him to meetings and conferences and is herself a well-known and popular figure. Friends in many countries grieve with her at her loss and extend to her their affection and admiration.

A. T. COWIE