

## Obituary

### HENRY VINCENT AIRD BRISCOE

HENRY VINCENT AIRD BRISCOE, who died on September 24th, 1961, his seventy-third birthday, was a pupil at the City of London School before entering the Royal College of Science where, in 1906, he was one of the last group of students to work in the chemistry laboratories in the "old College" in Exhibition Road, South Kensington. After graduation he was appointed to the academic staff, first as assistant to Professor Sir Edward Thorpe, then engaged in the revision of Thorpe's Dictionary of Applied Chemistry, and later as Demonstrator. He was a most conscientious teacher, and an indefatigable investigator in days when the facilities available were scanty—many a night was spent at the blowpipe or the workshop bench—and when the young lecturer (or indeed often the professor either) had no postgraduate student working under his guidance. His early researches consisted of accurate determinations of atomic weights, a subject which also engaged his attention in later years as Professor of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry at King's College (then Armstrong College), Newcastle (1921–32). Returning to Imperial College as Professor of Inorganic Chemistry he continued his investigations into the chemical behaviour of deuterium, fluorine, rhenium and germanium and their compounds. Work that he regarded as specially important related to the incidence of silicosis and involved microchemical analysis, which reflected his skill in conducting operations of high precision. Indeed he was one of the founders of the Microchemistry Group of the Society for Analytical Chemistry, of which he became a member in 1944 and in the same year was elected the first Chairman of the Group. By the same token he always took a particular interest in the analytical section of his department at Imperial College, where meanwhile he had become Director of the Laboratories for Inorganic and Physical Chemistry (1938–54); he regarded as of prime importance training in meticulous experimentation and precise measurement, and was instrumental in improving the facilities available there for micro, semi-micro and physical methods of analysis.

Professor Briscoe had held office in the Chemical Society, in the Society of Chemical Industry and in the Royal Institute of Chemistry, of which he had been a Vice-President for eleven years. Both during his active academic career and afterwards, when he was a guest of his old department, he kept in close touch with industrial aspects of his science, and was frequently called into consultation on a variety of topics, principally the chemistry of coke, paints, water supplies and dairy products. Throughout the 1939–45 War his services were freely offered to, and used by, Government agencies; in the years following the War he encouraged efforts to place the training of science laboratory technicians on a more satisfactory basis, and was himself Chairman of the Imperial College Technician Training Committee, of a joint Committee of the University of London Colleges having similar responsibilities, and of the National Joint Committee concerned with the recruitment, training and "deferment" of technicians.

Professor Briscoe will be remembered by all his associates not only as a distinguished chemist but also as a loyal colleague, full of human kindness as well as of worldly wisdom, and ever ready to extend a helping hand when the need arose.

A. A. ELDRIDGE