

## PROFESSOR BRENET'S CAREER



ON 30 SEPTEMBER, 1979, Professor Jean Paul Brenet retired from the Chair of Electrochemistry at the University of Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg, a position which he had held since 1963 and one of the two chairs of electrochemistry in France.

Born on 7 October, 1910, Professor Brenet is a physicist who later became an electrochemist. He studied at the University of Lyon where, in 1939, he was awarded his doctorate in physical sciences for his work in the field of nuclear physics on the emission of alpha rays from polonium. From 1944 to 1946 he worked on the X-ray investigation of organic compounds in the X-ray and Electron Diffraction Laboratory of the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris.

He left that Laboratory in 1946 when he was invited by La Société Les Piles Wonder to become Engineer in Chief in charge of their scientific research and development work. During the ten years that he was with this Company (1946–1955), J. P. Brenet's work resulted in his being the first person to show that the mechanism of cathodic reduction of the dioxides of manganese depended on their structures, and that for the gamma (orthorhombic) dioxide, the first step in its reduction was accompanied by a dilation of the lattice. Above all, however, J. P. Brenet is known as the discoverer in 1949–1951 of a process for activating natural manganese dioxides; this process, known as the Philodyne process, has been used industrially since 1950 in the manufacture of Leclanché cells.

As a result of the considerable scientific reputation which he had by now established, the University of Strasbourg invited him in 1955 to join the staff to teach electrochemistry and to establish an electrochemical

laboratory, facilities which had hardly existed previously. The main research effort at this laboratory was, understandably, directed towards the study of the mechanisms and energetics of electron transfer at electrode–electrolyte interfaces, with a marked orientation to electrochemical generators. Up to the present time this work has led to the publication of more than 300 papers and more than 60 theses or research notes.

Such a level of scientific activity naturally resulted in considerable international and national responsibilities. Thus, J. P. Brenet was elected Vice President (1961–1964) and then President (1964–1965) of the International Society for Electrochemistry, of which he founded, and was Chairman of, from 1954 to 1968, the Cells and Accumulators Section. The formation of this technical committee of the I.S.E. served as a focal point for the newly aroused interest in batteries which was taking place in Europe in 1955, and we shall always be grateful to J. P. Brenet for this farsighted action. In France he had numerous national responsibilities in Universities and Research Organisations, whilst he was invited to many countries as an expert adviser.

Professor J. P. Brenet is a Commander of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques and an Officer to the Légion d'Honneur. He is a Corresponding Member of the Yugoslavian Academy of Sciences.

His many friends in all parts of the world wish J. P. Brenet good health and many happy years of retirement, together with satisfaction and success in the scientific and technical work which we understand he will continue to carry out.

M. GROSS and P. CHARTIER