

BOOK REVIEWS

Jubileum Yearbook of the Veszprém Chemical University

1949 to 1974

Edited by Dr. ZOLTÁN SCHULTEISZ

Veszprém 1974. 218 pp

To commemorate its twenty-five years of existence, the Veszprém Chemical University published a memorial yearbook. This volume is an important source for our literature on science history, since it traces the history of the university from its foundation to its quarter-of-a-century jubilee. This University has been founded in 1949 as Faculty of Heavy Chemical Engineering of the Technical University, Budapest, but its rapid evolution has led to independence already in Autumn 1951. The organizational work has been directed by Károly Polinszky, assisted by Pál Benedek, László Fejes Tóth, Ernő Nemez, Gyula Straub, Dezső Varga and others. Work at the University began in the period of the first higher education reform. This fact contributed to the organization of an up-to-date, fresh-spirited university that although made use of valuable experience but was eager to develop its peculiar profile and character. Educational endeavours and achievements of this quarter of a century are treated in this book at a modest conciseness, pointing out the courageous but considerate liking for experimentation. No attempt is made, however, to embellish little successful experiments on methodology such as that on two, simultaneously delivered subjects, with the concomitant 38 hours of common study. An outstanding importance is ascribed to the educational co-operation. Namely, the Veszprém Chemical University, and the Keszthely Agricultural University (former College) have developed a common study program such that students in agrochemistry attend the entire second course in Veszprém, to acquire knowledge of chemistry, of crucial importance for them. This co-operation is unique and exemplary as an initiative in Hungarian higher education, and could also be followed in other specialities. Also the correspondence courses with partial residence worked well but were impossible to generalize for universities with a great attendance. Again, the Veszprém Chemical University has been a pioneer of multi-stage education. Thus, many-sided, highly significant educational experiments are seen to have taken place during these twenty-five years.

A detailed description is given of the scientific activity at the University. As a fundamental principle it is acknowledged that — provided basic material conditions are given — besides of safeguarding quiet working conditions, researchers need encouragement and appreciation. Another important effort is spent to co-ordinate and proportionate educational and research activity. In 1957 an important landmark of the scientific activity at the University was to launch a review of their own entitled "Publications of the Veszprém Chemical University" including papers in Hungarian, with summaries in Russian, English and German. The standard of the studies may be judged from their being fully abstracted in Chemical Abstracts. Co-operation in scientific research work is again peculiar to this University. Rather close relations exist with research institutes settled in Veszprém such as the Hungarian Research Institute for Petroleum and Natural Gas (MÁFKI), the Research Institute of Chemical Engineering (MKKI) and the Research Institute of Heavy Chemistry, so that since 1973 a common review in foreign languages has been published entitled "Hungarian Journal of Industrial Chemistry (Veszprém)". The scientific activity at the University can be assessed from the high number of congresses and similar programs.

A planned strive towards scientific degrees is manifest. Actually the university staff comprises nine academicians, six doctors of technical sciences and thirty candidates of technical sciences. Also international relations of the university are flourishing. Recently, Károly Polinszky, professor at this University has been granted the degree of honorary doctor of the Lenin Technical University, Leningrad.

The jubileum yearbook gives a description of the circumstances of foundation and development of each department, and of the particulars of its staff. One is glad to learn the up-to-date standard of laboratory equipment, a condition sine qua non of education in chemistry.

Special consideration is due to the history of the Department of Physical Education, reflecting the physical and sports activity of university students. When university educa-

tion started, no kind of sports establishment or equipment had been available. Sports lessons of weekly 1 hour were held in two small secondary school gymnasiums, a fact to be reminded of since in several of our old and recent institutions of higher education the same was or even is true. The trend of evolution in Veszprém is, however, manifest from the construction of the Municipal Stadium (1963), the University Gymnasium (1964), the small athletics course in the Lenin park built by social work in 1960, and the new basket-ball fields (1965). The swimming-pool is still missing but surely not for long.

The yearbook gives a colourful picture of the students' life at the university. It is interesting to see their attractive, cementing traditions developed in these mere twenty-five years, among them the nationally famed programs of the Veszprém University Days, organized yearly since 1969, including nomination of the Rector of Students. Three days of his rule are a witty, spectacular set of programs of the youth.

The volume includes a list of graduates, and a concluding bibliography on the history of the university.

Yearbook of the Veszprém Chemical University is praiseworthy both in contents and get-up. Its photos are adequate to the purport. This latter would still gain from being documented by other illustrative matter such as tables, diagrams and/or a name index.

The Veszprém Chemical University has attained an internationally acknowledged rank in Hungarian engineering education. Its activity has largely contributed to the industrialization of the neighbouring counties, as well as to the cultural and scientific development of Veszprém town itself. With its twenty-five years of activities, the University laid down the bases for its future achievements.

DR. K. HÉBERGER

Sulphide Catalysts, their Properties and Applications

by O. WEISSER and S. LANDA

Academiae Publishing House, Prague, 1972

(506 pages, over 2300 references and patent index)

Authors WEISSER and LANDA in their work compiled all references available from literature and patents up to the late sixties, pertaining to reactions catalyzed by all forms of metal sulfides.

Their monograph consists of two main parts: in the General Section, first a historical review is presented, than follow chapters on preparation and regeneration, physicochemical properties, methods of activation and influencing selectivity of sulfide catalysts.

The Special Section deals with uses of sulfide catalysts in the fields of hydrogenation, of both unsaturated and aromatic hydrocarbons, alkylation, hydrodealkylation and cracking reactions, hydrogenation of alcohols ethers, phenol compounds and of different carbonyl compounds, including organic acids.

The hydrogenation reactions of sulfur- and nitrogen-containing compounds have been dealt with in a more detailed chapter, and so have been synthesis reactions carried out in the presence of sulfide catalysts.

A long chapter is devoted to the uses of these catalysts in the fuel industries, where topics such as hydrogenation of coal, petroleum crudes and fractions, catalytic hydrodesulfurization and cracking are discussed.

Isomerization of hydrocarbons, dehydrogenation, catalytic reforming, oxydation, polymerization are the following chapters of the monograph, concluding this part with a chapter on special applications.

A bibliography containing over 2300 references and a patent index in numerical order according to countries is also included.

The monograph, by the very nature of that very broad field, cannot be expected at the same time to be a critical assessment. Though the title defines the contents to deal only with sulfide catalysts, in the opinion of the reviewer, it would have been advantageous if the authors had indicated in specific chapters other possible catalysts even better, for specific applications.

In spite of these objections, the monograph is very useful for all those interested in the corresponding fields and for those who want to have a comprehensive picture on the subject.

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