

Dr. P. Bruin (1902-1981)

Pieter Bruin, retired Director of the Institute for Soil Fertility, Haren, The Netherlands, died suddenly in Groningen on 22 October 1981 at the age of 79. He was an exceptionally active and inventive soil scientist who continued working until the last moment of his life.

Bruin was born in 1902 as the son of a roper in Graft, a small village in the province of North-Holland, where he finished his elementary education. After having finished grammar school in Alkmaar in 1921, he graduated in 1929 from the University of Amsterdam, Faculty of Chemistry. In that year he was appointed as chemist at the Agricultural Experiment Station in Groningen, later as head of the chemistry Department. After having been promoted to Assistant Director (1943) and Deputy Director (1944) of the same institute with the new name Agricultural Experiment Station and Institute for Soil

Research, he became its director in 1957 after a subsequent reorganization and another change of name to Institute for Soil Fertility. During his directorship the construction of a new building in Haren was started. His scientific activities resulted in a large number of lectures and in more than 70 papers. Through his work he proved to be a real leader of the soil fertility research in The Netherlands.

Bruin was convinced that intensive international contact between soil scientists is a 'must'. The science of soil fertility is strongly connected with regional and local problems. A close contact and an exchange of experience among research workers in the various countries is necessary to go beyond these limits and to give the science of soil fertility the impetus to introduce new principles in order to explain the diversity of experiences. Considering our society as an excellent forum for this purpose he frequented our international congresses. Therefore it is not surprising that he was one of the founders of the Working Committee on International Cooperation in Field Trials on Soil Fertility, started under the auspices of the ISSS in 1956 (see the Bulletins No 7 of 1955 and No 9 of 1956) to make a 'Study of the influence of physical, biological and climatological factors on the nitrogen conditions of the soil and the supply of the crops'. He was the stimulating President of this Committee from 1956 to 1980 and published a number of reports on its activities in our bulletin. For his scientific work he received the Doctor of Science Degree (honoris causa) in Agricultural Science from the Justus von Liebig University in Giessen (F.R.G.) on 1 July 1967.

The life of an outstanding man in many respects has come to an end. He was stimulating, spirited, friendly and courteous. His never failing readiness to help all who approached him will always be remembered with deep gratitude. Dr. Bruin is survived by his wife and three children and we sympathize with them in their loss.

Th. J. Ferrari, Haren (Gr), The Netherlands

