



OSCAR V. JOHANSSON

IN MEMORIAM

By

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OSCAR V. JOHANSSON, Ph. D. and former Professor of Meteorology at the University of Helsinki, died on March 4, 1956, at the age of 77 years. With his death Finnish meteorology lost a man whose influence on the development of meteorological science in Finland has been of the greatest importance. As the first professor of meteorology in Finland, JOHANSSON introduced meteorology as an independent science into Finnish academic life.

OSC. V. JOHANSSON was born in Helsinki on July 5, 1878. In 1897 he entered the University of Helsinki, where he graduated in 1903 after studies in mathematics, physics, astronomy and chemistry. Already in the same year he was appointed assistant at the Central Meteorological Office. With some short interruptions he then worked almost twenty years in this institution, including about two years as acting director. After further

studies in meteorology and physics in Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg, JOHANSSON in 1909 received his Ph. D. degree at the University of Helsinki with the thesis: »Über die Bestimmung der Lufttemperatur am meteorologischen Observatorium in Helsingfors.« In this comprehensive work JOHANSSON presented a critical study of the long series of temperature measurements from 1828 to 1905. In connection with his activity at the Central Meteorological Office JOHANSSON, in addition, published a large number of other important papers, most of them dealing with meteorological and climatological problems of Finland.

OSC. V. JOHANSSON always wanted to devote his life to pure research. Already in 1909 he was appointed »docent« (reader) in meteorology at the University of Helsinki, and in 1921 he accepted a personal professorship in meteorology at the same university. Since meteorology had not earlier been considered an independent science at this university, JOHANSSON's first task was to organize the necessary academic courses and to build up a small university institution of meteorology. To begin with he had, as the only teacher in meteorology, to lecture in all fields of meteorology, but gradually some of his former pupils took over some of the courses. Not until 1948 did JOHANSSON retire from his university position, at the age of 70 years.

Professor JOHANSSON always considered himself a pupil of the Austrian meteorologist JULIUS VON HANN. From this famous meteorologist he received his most important stimulus, but several other meteorologists from the »Austrian School«, such as PERNTER, TRABERT, EXNER and SCHMIDT, also influenced him during his studies in Vienna. JOHANSSON's numerous scientific publications, comprising more than 130 different papers, are primarily concerned with critical studies of observations, general climatology and especially the climatology of Finland, but several papers also are dealing with more special meteorological problems, such as vertical air currents in the free atmosphere, fog, etc. During the last years of his life he published a series of papers about the phenology in Finland. Characteristic of all his investigations are his thorough knowledge of the observation technique, including the errors involved, and a very critical attitude towards all results based upon empirical data. For our present knowledge of the climatic conditions in Finland his numerous investigations have been of fundamental importance. In the Geographical Society of Finland and the Finnish Society of Science JOHANSSON was very active, and especially in the scientific series of the latter society he published a large number of his most important papers. In recognition of JOHANSSON's importance for the development of the meteorological and climatological sciences in Finland, the Finnish

Society of Science, at its centenary celebration in 1938, awarded him the »Theodor Homén Prize» for distinguished contributions to geophysics.

Together with some of his colleagues and former students, JOHANSSON in 1926 founded the Geophysical Society of Finland. He also was elected the first president of the society, where during a long time he remained the dominating person. Whenever possible, he attended the meetings of the society, and numerous were the papers he presented there. To honour JOHANSSON on his 70th birthday in 1948, volume 3 of »*Geophysica*», the journal published by the Geophysical Society, was dedicated to him, and in 1951 he was elected the first honorary member of the society.

By nature very humble and inclined to self-criticism, OSC. V. JOHANSSON never liked to appear in the foreground. This probably explains why in later years he participated very little in the ever growing international collaboration in the field of meteorology; he preferred more and more to work in seclusion on the scientific problems selected by him already in earlier years. This does not mean that he did not take an interest in more recent developments in meteorology; on the contrary, many speeches at the meetings of the Society of Science and the Geophysical Society showed his keen interest in such new developments. JOHANSSON was always prepared to help and support his students in every respect, and many therefore are the students who, under his sponsorship, obtained the Ph. D. degree in meteorology at the university. Both through his own research and as a teacher he exercised a profound influence on the development of meteorology in Finland.