

OBITUARIES

Professor Weiko Aleksanteri HEISKANEN died in Helsinki on 23rd October, 1971 after a long illness.



Heiskanen was born on 23rd July, 1895. He received the degree of Master of Science (primus) in 1919 and his Ph. D. (ultimus) at Helsinki University in 1924.

His scientific career Heiskanen started at the Finnish Geodetic Institute in 1921, moved to the chair of geodesy at Helsinki Technological University then back to the Geodetic Institute as Director in 1949. He retired from this post in 1961.

In addition to the career in his home country Professor Heiskanen made a significant contribution to science through his work abroad and in international organizations. He was the Director of the International Isostatic Institute since its establishment in 1936. From 1950 onward he worked for Ohio State University and was Director of its Institute of Geodesy, Photogrammetry and Cartography up to 1965. In the International Association of Geodesy Heiskanen was

one of the most active members. He was the reporter on the isostasy 1930–60 and President of the Section V 1957–63. The years 1957–60 Heiskanen was Second Vice-President of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics and the President of the Arrangements Committee for the Helsinki Assembly in 1960.

The scientific work of Heiskanen concentrated on gravity. The international gravity formula, accepted in 1930, was founded aside on Cassinis' investigations on Heiskanen's extensive computations. He studied isostasy widely, using his own modification of Airy's hypothesis. Heiskanen's great idea was to create a global consistent geodetic system on the basis of gravity determinations all over the world. Within the International Isostatic Institute he made a great deal of progress towards this goal. Better surroundings for this extensive study he found in Ohio and set forth his programme in the publication "On the world geodetic system" in 1950. He made considerable advances and after him the work has been continued in Ohio.

Professor Heiskanen was honoured in many ways. He was a member of Finnish Academy of Sciences, Norwegian Academy of Sciences, Academia Nazionale dei Lincei, Academia Scientiarum Germanica Berolinesensis, American Academy of Arts and Sciences and Pontificia Academia Scientiarum. The honorary prize of the Wihuri Foundation and the Bowie Medal of the American Geophysical Union were awarded to him. He received honorary doctor's degrees from Bonn University, Helsinki Technological University and Uppsala University. He was invited to be Honorary President of the Nordic Geodetic Commission and an Honorary Member of the Council of the International Association of Geodesy.