

The 60th birthday of Dr. Ing. Zdeno Votický, DrSc.



Dr. Ing. Zdeno Votický, DrSc., was born on October 6th, 1925 in Bratislava, where he also graduated from the Faculty of Chemical Technology of the Slovak Technical University; there he took the degree of a Doctor of Technical Sciences. During his studies he was active as a laboratory supervisor, assistant and finally as a lecturer in the Department of Technology of Organic Compounds at the same University. After foundation of the Research Institute for Pharmacy and Biochemistry — branch in Bratislava, which underwent several reorganizations, he started his career as a young engineer in the laboratory of organic syntheses, where he was predominantly engaged in preparations of biologically effective compounds. On a laboratory scale, later in a pilot plant he took part in the synthesis of caffeine, theophylline, bromisoval, and a number of other pharmaceuticals.

Later on, he was involved in the synthesis of model compounds related to various types of alkaloids with the aim to study the relation between chemical structures and biological effect; results from this program afforded scientific material for his *CSc. Thesis*. In 1953 the above-mentioned Institute was embodied into the newly founded Slovak Academy of Sciences as the Institute of Chemistry. Its scientific orientation has since then been pointed towards the fundamental research.

The chemistry of alkaloids has made Dr. Votický enthusiastic for this field of organic chemistry and he successively extended his interest also to further constituents of prevalently medicinal plants. Results of his research in the chemistry of buxus alkaloids, which had been at that time in the very beginnings, ensured him the priority. Thus, *e.g.* he was the first who isolated and elucidated the structure of one nitrogen-containing buxus bases with a cyclopropane ring, or with an extended seven-membered ring and who indicated the presence of the alkaloid buxomegine in these plants, although it has so far been reported in African plants of a quite different genus, he provided evidence that one group of buxus alkaloids characteristic of an unsaturated five-membered ring is not native, but an artifact formed during the isolation process, he discovered unprecedented types of buxus alkaloids, and with coworkers he headed, he elucidated their structure. He described the first two quaternary alkaloids of periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) and published a lot of other original papers concerning not only the chemistry of alkaloids, but also other interesting topics. During his one-year stay in the United States of America he made some contribution to the chemistry of indole

alkaloids in plants of South American origin. Results of these investigations served for many lectures for chemical community in Czechoslovakia and abroad, and constituted his *Doctor of Science Thesis*.

At the time being, Dr. Votický is heading the Department of Natural Products of the Institute of Chemistry, Centre for Chemical Research of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which covers also the chemistry of polysaccharides of medicinal plants, pectic substances, starch and its modifications, their properties and application possibilities.

As a scientist he published by one-hundred original papers, trained several domestic and foreign post-graduate students, is the member of scientific, examination and editorial boards. He is also a member of the Executive Editorial Board of the Journal *Chemical Papers*. He was active in social organizations and was awarded various honours and distinctions. He is a merited member of the Slovak Chemical Society at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, a member of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, a holder of a golden memorial medal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and a silver plaque of the Slovak Academy of Sciences for merits in natural sciences.

The Slovak Chemical Society sympathises with the achievements of the jubilarian and joins many of his friends and coworkers wishing him a good health for further work on the progress of chemistry in our country.

J. Tomko