

OBITUARY

PROF. B. M. DAS (1886-1956)

WE regret to record the death of Prof. B. M. Das, Director, Central Leather Research Institute, Madras, due to heart failure on September 5, 1956.

Rai Bahadur B. M. Das was born in 1886 in Faridpore. He took his M.A. Degree examination in chemistry from the Presidency College, Calcutta University, obtaining the first rank. He carried out research initially on the Chamber Process for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, under Sir P. C. Ray, and was the first to put commercial sulphuric acid manufactured by an Indian firm on the market. Later he proceeded to Leeds University to study leather technology, and obtained the M.Sc. Degree in applied chemistry of leather manufacture. He worked for some time in a big commercial tannery in Milan and for two years served as technical chemist with *Farbenfabriken Friedrich Bayer & Co.*, in Germany.

On his return to India he joined the National Tannery in Calcutta where he worked as its Manager for about twenty-four years, modernising and expanding the tannery. While there, he was instrumental in establishing the Bengal Tanning Institute under the Government of Bengal. In recognition of his services to the leather industry, the Government of India awarded him the title of *Rai Bahadur* and also the Silver Jubilee Medal.

Prof. Das was appointed Chairman of the Leather Panel by the Government of India in 1944, and two years later he went to Germany as Technical Investigator of the German Tanning Industry under the British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee (B.I.O.S.). He also visited U.S.A. and U.K. to study the tanning industries in these countries. He was appointed by the Government of West Bengal as its adviser on leather and tanning, and in this

capacity, he carried out work at the Bengal Tanning Institute on the adaptation of German processes for the improvement of the Indian leather industry.

The technical reports published by him on these occasions contain valuable information on modern European and American processes of leather manufacture and the manufacture of leather auxiliaries. Besides these reports, he published a large number of bulletins and articles on leather research and leather technology. His book entitled *Handbook of Tanning* published by Government of Bengal as Department of Industries Bulletin No. 63 has had a wide appreciation and has passed through three editions. He has trained a large number of students in leather technology who are at present holding responsible posts in leather industry all over India, Burma and Ceylon.

From 1948 to 1951, he was appointed as Industrial Adviser on Leather and Tanning by the Government of West Bengal, and in September 1951 his services were requisitioned by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research as Officer on Special Duty, Central Leather Research Institute, Madras. He was appointed as Director of the Central Leather Research Institute in January 1953 in which capacity he rendered valuable service to leather trade and industry till his demise in harness.

Prof. Das was also Hon. Professor of Leather Technology and Chairman of the Faculty of Technology, University of Madras, from 1954 onwards, and was associated with several of the committees connected with leather trade and industry: Leather Research Committee of the Government of India, Hides and Skins Committee of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Leather Section Committee of the Indian Standards Institution.

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

SEVENTY nations last month signed the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency at the concluding session of a 4-week Conference organized by the United Nations in New York. In his closing speech, Joao Carlos Muniz of Brazil, President of the Conference, emphasized that there was nothing compulsory in the relationship between Member States and the Agency, and that the Agency will not impose complete international con-

trol over nuclear fuels or source materials. It would be a free association of nations to bring the benefits of atomic progress to all peoples. The new atomic era, he affirmed, would have much wider consequences than the first industrial revolution. Nuclear materials made available by members of the Agency will be used in agriculture, medicine and for other peaceful purposes.