

PROFESSOR H. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI

A Personal Appreciation

I first met Professor Niewodniczański at the Rutherford Jubilee International Conference in Manchester in 1961, and at practically every subsequent conference (Padua 1962, Paris 1964, Antwerp 1965, Gatlinburg 1966, Tokyo 1967) his massive and imposing figure was at the centre of the proceedings. Soon after the Manchester Conference some of his colleagues from Cracow, Adam Strzałkowski, Kasimir Grotowski and Andrew Budzanowski wrote enquiring if we would be interested in analysing in Oxford some of the experimental results on deuteron elastic scattering obtained with their own cyclotron. We were happy to do this and the results were subsequently published [1, 2]. More recently some results on the elastic and inelastic scattering of alpha particles have also been analysed in Oxford [3, 4]. An invitation to visit Cracow followed in 1963 and there I was able to see more clearly the magnitude of Professor Niewodniczański's achievement. The Institute in Cracow was built largely through his efforts in the aftermath of the Second World War in spite of appalling difficulties. His pride in his Institute was evident and well-founded; in his office he kept a great book in which all visitors were invited to record their impressions and over the years he accumulated the impressive number of heartfelt tributes to his work. He extended a warm welcome to the visitors to his Institute and encouraged the close collaboration between Oxford and Cracow that still endures, strengthened by mutual visits and meetings at conferences.

On a second visit in 1966 I was privileged with my wife to visit his holiday chalet in Bukovina and to enjoy once again his hospitality in a more informal way. Two years later he visited England and it was a particular pleasure to be able to welcome him to Oxford and to take him to dinner at Corpus Christi College in the company of Professor Hryniewicz who accompanied him.

On the wall of his office in Cracow there is a picture of the young Niewodniczański in the company of Rutherford at Cambridge. We in England who know what he did to establish nuclear physics in Poland naturally think of him as the Rutherford of Poland. His work for nuclear physics was in a heroic scale and will endure into the future, but we will remember him first of all as a kindly and benevolent friend.

P.E. Hodgson

REFERENCES

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