

# RNDr. Jan Prokopič, D.Sc. is fifty

On August 23, 1976 Dr. Jan Prokopič, one of the prominent Czechoslovak parasitologists, Deputy Director of the Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Head of the Experimental Helminthology Department of this Institute, celebrated his 50th birthday. A native of Velkrop in eastern Slovakia, only after the victorious establishment of the Socialist system in 1948 he could be sent as a talented worker to the Charles University in Prague to study at the Natural History Faculty where he graduated in 1953. During his studies (1949 till 1953) he became interested in helminthology, particularly in parasitic worms of cattle, while collaborating with the parasitologists of the present Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. After his graduation he joined the staff of this Institute (1953) and studied the problems of systematics, biology and ecology of parasites infesting domestic, productive and free-living animals. He specialized in parasitology-helminthology. In his diploma paper he presented a first faunistic survey of parasitic worms of cattle in Czechoslovakia and the work became a fundamental source of information on this problem in this country. Already as a university student, while participating in the complex research of natural focality of diseases together with the workers of the then Biological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, he treated the material of parasitic worms of insectivores.

In 1958 he passed the examination required for the award of the Candidate of Biological Sciences degree on the basis of his thesis entitled "Parasitic worms of our insectivores". In the same year he was a member of the team honoured with a decoration "For distinction in labour". He took part in the complex parasitological expedition to Albania (1958) where he collected parasitic worms of cattle, sheep, pigs, dogs and cats as well as amphibians; he published the results of his studies on this material in four papers. In the years 1959—1965 he studied ecology of helminths parasitizing cattle and sheep in pasture lands in Bohemia and treated the helminthofauna of carnivores. In 1965 he went for a long-term study visit in the Cuban Republic where he accumulated a large material of parasitic worms of cattle, sheep, pigs, dogs, cats and rodents. He published his scientific results in several papers included in the series of papers on Czechoslovak parasitological research in Cuba which were twice awarded a prize by the Scientific Board of Special Biology, Czechoslovak

Academy of Sciences. Since 1966 he has been engaged in the research of developmental cycles and ecology of helminths of small mammals. During all his ecological-faunistic studies of helminths of small mammals for more than twenty years he also paid attention to natural focality of trichinellosis and adiaspiromycosis. For the discovery of adiaspiromycosis in animals in Czechoslovakia and a further original elaboration of this problem he and the involved team of scientists were awarded the Klement Gottwald State Prize in 1972. He published some separate papers on the occurrence and hosts of the fungus *Emmonsia crescens*. In the same year he submitted his doctoral thesis entitled: "Developmental cycles of cestodes of small mammals and their ecology" and received his Doctor of Biological Sciences degree. In this dissertation paper, which was later published, he presented new views on the role of helminths in biocenoses of various biotopes and emphasized the importance of these parasites within the whole framework of live matter in ecosystems. Later he included his research of similar character in comparative zoogeographical studies on the distribution of helminths of small mammals in different parts of Europe (as co-author with T. Genov "Distribution of helminths in micro-mammals (Insectivora and Rodentia) under different ecological and geographical conditions: Studie ČSAV 9: 1—159, 1974), while some other papers with co-authors concerned the research in Austria, Spain, Georgia and elsewhere. He also applied his knowledge on the difference of helminthofauna of small mammals in various biotopes to the research of helminths of amphibians (Prokopič, Krivánek: Helminths of amphibians, their interaction and host-parasite relationship. Přírodovědné práce ústavů ČSAV, Brno 9/3: 1—48, 1975).

Owing to his work on helminthological element of biocenoses Dr. Prokopič may be listed among the pioneers of such studies in Europe and his papers received a wide international response. His research on helminthofauna of cattle, carnivores and amphibians laid foundations for exact knowledge of helminths of these animal groups in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

On the occasion of his important anniversary the editors wish Dr. Prokopič good health and much success in further helminthological research and in his beneficial scientific-organizational activities.

Prof. Dr. B. Rosický, D.Sc.