

## Fiftieth birthday of Karel Samšíňák

On January 2, 1973 Dr. Karel Samšíňák, C.Sc. scientific worker of the Arachnoentomological Department of the Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, celebrated his fiftieth birthday. He was born in Sobotka (district of Jičín) and in the first post-war years completed his studies at the Natural History Faculty, Charles University in Prague, where he was granted the RNDr. degree. After graduation he took a post of naturalist at the regional museum in Jičín where he worked until 1954. He then came back to Prague and joined the group of scientists who comprised the staff of the then Biological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

His primary interest was entomology where he focused attention on ants. While working at the Biological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences he was engaged in the studies on insect pests of the order Acarina. Later on, when he continued to work at the newly established Institute of Entomology, he specialized in insect pathology.

In 1959, on the basis of his dissertation on mites parasitizing insects, he received the degree of Candidate of Biological Sciences and since that time research on mites has remained his major interest. Gradually most of his time was devoted to the study of mites as pests of stored products, to problems of house dust mites causing allergic afflictions in man and to other problems of medical acarology. In 1968 he transferred to the Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. This step reflected his final scientific interest and marked twenty years in his professional career during

which he has become one of the prominent Czechoslovak acarologists.

Dr. Samšíňák published about one hundred scientific and professional papers. Apart from taxonomic problems they deal with the relationships between mites and insects and those between mites and man. They are the results of his studies on the mass occurrence of mites in the apartments in new housing estates, where a new isolation material sopalit was used. Sopalit proved to be a favourable environment for mites *Tyrophagus putrescentiae* which together with mites *Cheyletus aversor* induced dermatitides of the inhabitants. Thus Dr. Samšíňák's attention was attracted to the group of mites harmful to man (*Pyemotes*, *Ornithonyssus* etc.).

His theoretical scientific interest is closely connected with practice, especially with public health. Most important in this respect has been his work on asthmatic afflictions of allergic origin caused by mites of the genus *Dermatophagoides*. It is due to his studies that an allergen has been prepared from these mites which might be used in diagnostics and some important knowledge applied in epidemiology. Another range of questions at which Dr. Samšíňák is now working in cooperation with medical centres is the bionomy of *Sarcoptes scabiei*, the causative agent of a disease which still poses a dermatological problem.

We wish Dr. Samšíňák good health, much enthusiasm and further success in his scientific work.

Dr. M. Daniel, C.Sc.