

## Obituary

### PROFESSOR DR MED. LOUIS SIGURD FRIDERICIA

The death in his 67th year of Prof. L. S. Fridericia robbed The Nutrition Society of another distinguished member, Denmark of one of her outstanding scientists and nutritional research of an inspired worker.

Though his claim to fame rests on a much broader foundation, Fridericia was probably best known outside his country for his work on refection. The spectacular discovery in 1925 of this condition in which rats can grow and thrive without 'vitamin B' in their food was followed by an exhaustive study of the phenomenon by Fridericia and his pupils. These beautifully executed experiments showed that refection enabled rats to make use of the vitamins synthesized in the caecum by microbial agency but normally little available to ordinary rats. The great importance of these findings is now becoming increasingly evident with the growing realization of the contribution of the microbial population of the gut to the nutritive needs of animals and of man.

Fridericia was born in Copenhagen in February 1881. The family had come to Denmark in the 1750's and had settled in the Jutland town of Fredericia from which it took the name. Graduating in medicine in 1906 Fridericia became assistant to Christian Bohr in the Physiological Laboratory of Copenhagen University, transferring two years later to the Institute of General Pathology under Carl Julius Salomonsen. From 1913 to 1918 he held a series of appointments in the medical wards of Copenhagen hospitals, specializing in diseases of the heart. In 1918 he was offered the Chair of Hygiene in the University of Copenhagen and soon reorganized the Department and its teaching. With the support of private and public funds the University Institute of Hygiene—a now justly famous Institution—was created.

From his early days at the Physiological Laboratory Fridericia retained an interest in problems of nutrition; between 1917 and 1924 he and his co-workers published a series of important papers on vitamin A, the work on refection followed and, when the State Vitamin Laboratory was formed in 1932, Fridericia became its first director. In the ensuing years he gave increasing attention to general matters of the nutrition of Danish people, studying specially conditions in institutions, orphanages and hospitals.

From 1918 until his death Fridericia was adviser on hygiene to the Danish Department of Health. A man of many interests, great energy and an insatiable appetite for work, Fridericia was given many tasks to perform. He was a member of the Labour Board, chairman of the Medical Officers' Commission, delegate from 1918 to 1923 to the Scandinavian Food Commission, a member of the Technical Commission of the Health Committee of the League of Nations and, after the last war, he represented Denmark at the F.A.O. Conference.

After the Nazi invasion of his country Fridericia had to hide and, with the worsening of the persecution in 1943, was smuggled by friends to Sweden hidden in a fishing boat. From there he came to London, returning to Denmark after her liberation.

While in England, which he considered his second home, he joined wholeheartedly in the activities of The Nutrition Society and often took part in discussions at scientific conferences, driving points home with quiet wit and a fine command of the language. He gladly put his knowledge and experience at the service of the Society, acted as chairman of the Conference on Co-ordination of Methods of Survey in Liberated Countries and was also chairman of the Laboratory Panel of the Conference.

Fridericia was an accomplished linguist, a man of great culture and a great lover of music. He was married to the well-known violinist Karen (Monies) Fridericia. Their hospitable home was a meeting place for people of many and varied interests.

Mrs Fridericia, who served throughout the war in the Danish Brigade, died of overwork a few days after her return to liberated Denmark. Fridericia never really recovered from the shock, and he appeared to his friends an aged and changed man when he came here again in July 1946 to attend the European Conference of The Nutrition Society.

Already at that time the illness that was to kill him in a few months' time must also have been undermining his health. In February 1947 he underwent an operation at which it was discovered that he had an inoperable cancer involving the liver, spleen and aorta; he died 3 days later.

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