

## OBITUARY NOTICES

EUGÈNE JOSEPH DELPORTE was born on 1882 January 10 in Genappe, province of Brabant, Belgium. He graduated at Brussels University and in 1903 obtained the Degree of Doctor of Science with 1st class Honours in Physics and Mathematics.

In 1903, at the early age of 21, he joined the Belgian Royal Observatory as a voluntary assistant. A year later he was promoted to assistant and in 1909, after five years of work, he was appointed Assistant Astronomer, finally rising to the status of Astronomer in 1924. Twelve years later, in 1936, he was made Director and for the rest of his life he dedicated himself to the systematic observation of small planets. In 1947 he was made Honorary Director whilst he was pursuing his work in relation to the determination of the exact position of asteroids. We may recall that from 1903 to 1923 he was attached to the service of "the Meridian" and that from 1923 to 1936, when he became Director, he was Chief Astronomer of the Service of Equatorials.

During his life he obtained many academic distinctions. At the age of 46, in 1928, he was awarded the Prix Agathon De Potter by the Royal Academy of Belgium, and in 1937 he was made Member Correspondent of the Bureau of Longitude in Paris. In 1947 he was accepted as Member Correspondent of the Science Academy of Paris; and in 1950 he was awarded the Belgian distinction of scientific "Doyen du Travail" for astronomy. He was also a member of the National Belgian Committee of Astronomy since its foundation in 1919, becoming its Vice-President in 1936, and President from 1947 until his death in 1955. Since the creation of the International Astronomical Union in Brussels in 1919 until the Dublin Congress of 1955, M Delporte attended all the International Astronomical Conferences, with only two exceptions.

He was a member of many Committees and from 1938 to 1948 he was President of a Commission whose object was the observation of planets, comets and satellites, and the determination of their positions and "ephemerides". Several times he took part in the Congresses organised in Paris by the National Committee of French Astronomy, and he was also President of various Congresses of the French Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1946 he attended the Executive Committee of the International Astronomical Union in Copenhagen. He also took part in the Belgian Congresses of Science of 1930, 1935 and 1950. In addition he found time to be a member of numerous learned Societies connected with Astronomy in Belgium and abroad. He was Secretary-Editor of Astronomy to the Journal *Ciel et Terre* from 1909 to 1926, and from 1927 until his death he was Vice-President of the Belgian Astronomical Society. For two years, between 1920 and 1922, he directed the service of Astronomical Telegrams of the International Astronomical Union.

During his lifetime M Delporte made many observations and was responsible for the compilation of several important catalogues of stars. In 1912, in collaboration with M E. Viennet of Paris Observatory, he determined the difference in longitude between Uccle and Paris Observatories.

In 1923, as Chief of the "Equatorial Service", he organised the investigation of small planets. He discovered several dozens of small planets, amongst which may be mentioned Amor and Adonis, which have very peculiar orbits. His name is attached to the discovery of the Comet Dutoit-Neujmin-Delporte.