

PRESENTATION OF THE THIRD ROEBLING MEDAL OF
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
TO LEONARD JAMES SPENCER

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About ten years ago the Council of the Mineralogical Society of America made plans to establish a medal in recognition of exceptionally distinguished work in the field of mineralogy. The first award of the Roebling Medal was made in December, 1937, to Professor Charles Palache, the recognized leader in the field of mineralogy in America. The second award was made the following year to Dr. Waldemar T. Schaller of the United States Geological Survey in appropriate recognition of his distinguished services to the Society and to the science of mineralogy.

This year the committee has wisely selected as the recipient of the honor a man who is not an American, thus emphasizing the fact that the medalist is chosen as a leader in mineralogy, not merely in America, but in all the world.

Leonard James Spencer was born in Worcester, England, in 1870. He obtained his education in science in a series of institutions, beginning in the Technical College at Bradford in Yorkshire, continuing at the Royal College of Science at Dublin, Ireland, the University of Cambridge, England, and the University of Munich, Germany. He won honors at Dublin and the Harkness University Scholarship at Cambridge.

He expected to become a geologist, but his first opportunity in science came in 1894 as an assistant in the Mineral Department of the British Museum, and that circumstance diverted his attention to mineralogy, although he had begun collecting ammonites and belemnites on the Yorkshire coast at the tender age of seven years!

He became a member of the Mineralogical Society of London in 1894, a member of the Council in November, 1899, and succeeded Professor A. H. Miers as Editor of the *Mineralogical Magazine* at the end of 1900. He is, therefore, just now completing forty years of service in that capacity and during that time he has edited thirteen volumes of the Journal. In January, 1920, he established *Mineralogical Abstracts*, of which seven volumes have now been published. It is a mere statement of fact to say that *Mineralogical Abstracts* has come to be recognized very generally as the best publication of its kind. It is now the chief source of prompt information regarding all publications in the field of mineralogy, and, as such, it is of fundamental importance in all research work in our science.

For forty-three years he has been publishing a list of new mineral names

in each volume of the *Mineralogical Magazine* and the fifteenth list of this series has just made its appearance.

Dr. Spencer has written many scientific articles dealing with the characters of minerals; for example, he proved that binnite is only a synonym of tennantite, and he described accurately and gave names to eight new minerals. He has made elaborate and important studies of meteorites and tektites. A hydrous zinc phosphate from British Columbia has been named spencerite in his honor.

He made a skillful translation of two large volumes—one, R. Brauns' "Das Mineralreich," and the other, Max Bauer's "Edelsteinkunde." He has published two books of his own; the first one is "The World's Minerals," published in 1911, and the second is "A Key to Precious Stones," which appeared in 1936.

It is remarkable how widely his ability as an abstractor has been used. He has prepared abstracts in the field of mineralogical chemistry ever since 1895 for the Chemical Society of London. He was referee for the mineralogy volumes of the International Catalogue of Scientific Literature from 1900 to 1914. He was collaborateur for crystallography and mineralogy for the international "Tables annuelles de constantes et données numeriques" from 1911 to 1930. He prepared many articles on minerals for the eleventh to fourteenth editions of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and articles on economic minerals for Thorpe's Dictionary of Applied Chemistry.

He has received many honors, including an honorary degree from the National University of Ireland; the Geological Society of London awarded him the Wollaston Fund in 1902 and the Murchison Fund in 1937. He is an honorary life fellow of the German Mineralogical Society, and of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, which presented to him its Bolitho gold medal. He has been a corresponding member of the Mineralogical Society of America since the first small group of such honorary members was selected in 1927. He was President of the Mineralogical Society of London from 1936 to 1939.

He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1925, and Commander in the Order of the British Empire in 1934. He is also a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, of the Chemical Society of London, and of the Royal Geographical Society.

It is a great pleasure to me that I am given the honor to announce the award of the Roebling medal of the Mineralogical Society of America to Dr. Leonard James Spencer and to present it to Mr. Harold E. Slaymaker, British Consul in Houston, Texas, for transmittal to the one we are glad to honor.