

## ACCEPTANCE OF THE ROEBLING MEDAL OF THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

NORMAN L. BOWEN, *Geophysical Laboratory, Washington, D. C.*

*Mr. President, Professor Buddington, Fellows and Members of the Mineralogical Society, and guests:*

Yes, it is a great handicap to be insignificant-looking. If I were about 6 feet 5 instead of about 5 feet 6, with a few other improvements too of course, no one would have any doubt that I was a good petrologist, whether I had done any petrology or not. In that connection I think I'll tell you a story, a true story. Some years ago, at meetings just such as these, a friend of mine hurried up to me in the corridor and said, "Oh, there you are. Come with me. Anstruther Perkins (the name is fictitious but indicative) wishes to meet you. Says he has never met Bowen, and I want to be the one to introduce you, so that I may witness his disappointment." It follows me everywhere. Even here, Professor Buddington, while praising me extravagantly, as is his duty on such an occasion, nevertheless manages to suggest, in his sly way, that I am a Canada goose.

Now I am not going to indulge in any display of false modesty and say that the branch of mineral investigation to which I have devoted my life is an unimportant one. I think it is the most important. The problems of the genesis of minerals and rocks are their fundamental problems. I would not go so far as to suggest that the laboratory method of attack on mineral genesis is superior to field attack. They supplement each other, and where they seem to point to different conclusions, the answer is more and better field work and more aptly conceived laboratory work. Whenever opportunity presents, a laboratory investigator should himself get into the field in order that he may have first-hand acquaintance with the problems of nature. As Professor Buddington has stated, I have done some work in the field. I choose an area where a Buddington has been toiling arduously for several years, and get him to show me around, preferably examining outcrops that one can ride right up to in an automobile. When it becomes necessary to ride a horse to an outcrop my prowess is much less marked, as many of my friends can attest, and if it comes to actual foot-slogging, well, least said soonest mended. But to others I always recommend frequent indulgence in this health-giving activity.

Teamwork in science is something of which we hear much nowadays. The visits to Buddingtons which I have mentioned are an example. There is teamwork within laboratories, too. Perhaps the most famous (as some

would say, infamous) example was the Manhattan Project. But teamwork was the hall-mark of the Geophysical Laboratory long before there was any need for a Manhattan Project. Cooperation between physicists, chemists, and geologists was and is the basis of the organization. The Council of the Society is well aware of this, and I am sure had my colleagues in mind, as well as me, in making this award. I would accomplish nothing without my associates. Several of my colleagues, including myself, are very close to the end of our careers as laboratory investigators, but we are building up a stable of prancing young thoroughbreds. See that your field glasses are in order; you will need them to follow these colts.

Scientific research is its own reward. I venture to assert that if the Roebling award were discontinued tomorrow, not a single mineral investigator would cease and desist from his labors on that account, or even slacken his pace. Nevertheless, when such an award as the Roebling Medal comes to one, if my own feelings are any criterion, it is received with great pleasure, mixed with a disturbing sense of unworthiness and a resolve to do better. It is especially gratifying to be introduced by you, Professor Buddington, the leading educator of Canadian geologists, and to receive the medal at your hands, Mr. President, both of you alumni of the Geophysical Laboratory.

Mr. President, I cannot find the words to express my feelings, but I do thank the Mineralogical Society of America most heartily for the great honor it has done me today.