Physicists Gather For Conference, Joint Meeting Of Famous Societies

By THOMAS CLEGG

In further celebration of this Semicentennial year and in honor of the late Professor Tom Wilkerson Bonner, Rice was host last week to the International Conference in Fast Neutron Physics and a joint meeting of the Sociedad Mexicana de Fisica and the American Physical Society.

Over five hundred physicists gathered from eleven countries from as far away as Yugoslavia to report on work they are doing and to exchange ideas with their colleagues.

THE NEUTRON conference began Tuesday with a series of five sessions and twenty invited papers on topics ranging from neutron sources to neutron polarization studies.

At memorial services Thursday morning President Kenneth S. Pitzer dedicated the nuclear lab as the T. W. Bonner Nuclear Laboratories, and at the memorial session immediately following, delegates heard Chancellor William V. Houston recount the valuable contributions that Dr. Bonner made to experimental neutron physics while here at Rice. The simplicity of his experimental methods pointed out a deep understanding of the fundamental physical processes involved in the problems he was studying.

AT THIS SAME session Sir John Cockcroft of Cambridge University, builder of the first nuclear particle accelerator at Rutherford's Cavendish Laboratory in 1928, gave a personal account of the early work in nuclear physics at this lab.

Many delegates remained for the joint Physical Society meeting which followed. In terms of the number of contributed and invited papers presented it was the largest southwestern meeting of the American Physical Society ever held.

One paper of rather widespread interest was that of Dr. James Van Allen of the State University of Iowa, discoverer of the now-famous Van Allen radiation belts which encircle the globe. Dr. Van Allen reported on research carried out in connection with the U.S. satellite program since the discovery of these belts in 1958.