

The Gaston Planté Medal Presentation Address

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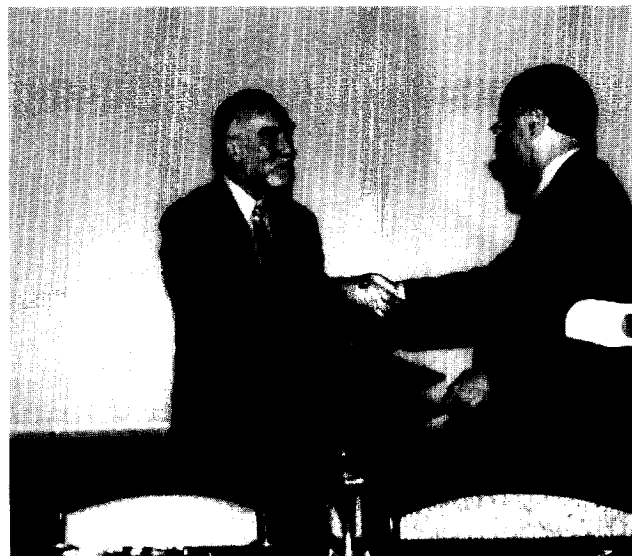
Once again, I am particularly pleased to attend the ceremony for the award of the Gaston Planté Medal of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

It is often said that the lead/acid battery invented by Gaston Planté in 1860 arrived ten years too early: it preceded devel-

opments in other areas of electricity. I think that we can understand this 'premature' birth, and one of the reasons seems to be that electrochemistry, science and technology have always been linked inseparably.

I have had the opportunity to witness the attitude of electrochemists, when participating in discussions on fundamental and applied science. Usually, their position can be summarized as follows: 'We do understand the question, but we do not see the problem!' This attitude can be easily explained if we take a look at the programme of LABAT'96 and at the names and affiliations of the members of the lead/acid battery community, who are taking part in this Conference. It is immediately clear that in your field there is no distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' science, as there is no pure and applied electrochemistry. This tradition stems from Gaston Planté himself. He was both an inventor and a scientist, which explains his numerous contributions to the development of lead/acid batteries and to the formulation of the basic theoretical questions. Some of these questions are still the focus of attention in contemporary electrochemistry.

Contribution to science and technology has obviously been the leading criterion of the honorable Gaston Planté Medal Committee in ranking the nominees for the 1996 Award. There is no doubt that the task of the Committee has been a hard one. The nominees are very well known to most of you



and it is easy to imagine how difficult it is to select the best among scientists of equal merit and achievement. The Committee has found a solution and the Board of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences accepts this solution with satisfaction.

This year, we shall have two Gaston Planté Medallists. The choice of these prominent electrochemists highlights once more the worldwide interest and scientific contribution to the development and application of lead/acid batteries. Up to

now, representatives of three European schools have been decorated with Gaston Panté Medal. This year, the Medal is awarded to Dr Kathryn Bullock from Lucent Technologies, Bell Laboratories, USA and to Dr David Rand from CSIRO, Australia.

It is my personal pleasure and honour to present Dr Bullock and Dr Rand with the Gaston Planté Medal of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.