I. INTRODUCTION

The thermal dissociation reaction

\[ \text{CF}_3(+\text{Ar}) \rightarrow \text{CF}_2 + \text{F}(+\text{Ar}) \]  

(1)

under typical shock wave conditions offers the opportunity to investigate unimolecular reaction behavior close to the low-pressure limit. The reaction has found some interest\(^1\) because it plays a role in flame retardation by halons as well as in the high-temperature oxidation of fluorinated materials. In a first investigation,\(^1\) it was assumed to be in the low-pressure limit. However, deviations from this behavior have been taken into consideration in later studies.\(^2,3\) These were based on theoretical modeling of the limiting high-pressure rate constants \(k_\infty\) and estimates of the limiting low-pressure rate constants \(k_0\), the latter employing adjusted average energies transferred per collision (\(\Delta E\)). This practice is quite common, when direct measurements of \(\Delta E\) are not available. One of the rare exceptions to this practice is the precursor of reaction 1, i.e., the dissociation of \(\text{CF}_3I\),\(^4\)

\[ \text{CF}_3I(+\text{Ar}) \rightarrow \text{CF}_3 + I(+\text{Ar}) \]  

(2)

for which \(\Delta E\) has been determined in separate IR multiphoton excitation experiments (see work cited in ref 4). This reaction is also used in the present work. As measurements of \(k_0\) continue to provide an important method to access \(\Delta E\), it appears of interest to inspect the accuracy of the approach. This not only concerns the analysis of \(k_0\) but also the difference between modeled and measured rate constants \(k\) in the falloff range of the reaction. This is the focus of the present article.

A systematic modeling of falloff curves of unimolecular bond breaking and the reverse radical recombination reactions showed\(^5\) that limiting low- and high-pressure rate constants are approached in different ways. Expressed in terms of broadening factors \(F(x)\), defined by \(k/k_\infty = [x/(1+x)]F(x)\) with \(x = k_0/k_\infty\), this means that \(F(x) \neq F(1/x)\). In a first systematic analysis of \(F(x)\), "symmetric broadening factors" (i.e., \(F(x) = F(1/x)\)) were assumed and approximated in the form

\[
F(x) \approx F_{\text{cent}}^{1/(1+\text{log}(N)^2)}
\]  

(3)

with "center broadening factors" \(F_{\text{cent}}\) and "widths" \(N\) given by

\[ N \approx 0.75 - 1.27 \log F_{\text{cent}}.\]

The more detailed, master-equation based, study of refs 5, 6 led to asymmetric broadening factors (i.e., \(F(x) \neq F(1/x)\)) of the form

\[
F(x) \approx (1 + x/x_0)/[1 + (x/x_0)^{q/n}]
\]  

(4)

with

\[
n \equiv [\ln 2/\ln(2/F_{\text{cent}})][1 - b + b(x/x_0)^q]
\]  

(5)

where \(q = (F_{\text{cent}} - 1)/\ln (F_{\text{cent}}/10)\), \(x_0\) in the range of 0.9–1.1 (mostly \(x_0 \approx 1\)), and \(b\) in the range 0.1–0.25 (mostly \(b \approx 0.2\)). Obviously, the \(F_{\text{cent}}\) in eqs 3–5 dominate the broadening of the falloff curves in comparison to the Lindemann–Hinshelwood
model \( F_{\text{c}} = 1 \) but the detailed form of \( F(x) \) is of importance as well. The following study compares the approach of the falloff curves of reaction 1 to the low-pressure limit, considering eqs 3–5 as well as a master-equation solution described in ref 2. The present analysis is also accompanied by new experimental work.

In connection with the interest in extrapolations of falloff curves to limiting rate constants, the earlier decomposition studies of CF3 decomposition were extended. The use of the curves to limiting rate constants, the earlier decomposition limit, considering eqs 3 as such that their studies of CF3 decomposition were extended. The use of the curves to limiting rate constants, the earlier decomposition limit, considering eqs 3 as well.

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II. EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUE AND RESULTS

The present measurements were carried out in a shock tube using both reflected and incident shock waves and the technique is described in detail in an earlier work (see, e.g., refs 3, 4, 8, 9). Like the previous studies,1–3 the precursor for CF3 was CF3I, dissociating by reaction 2. As the UV absorption of CF3 near 200 nm is too weak to allow for sufficiently sensitive detection of CF3, the broad UV continuum absorption of CF2 was used to follow the dissociation. Absorption signals were recorded in the standard way, using a high-pressure Xe arc lamp (Osmar XBO 150 W/4) as the light source, a quartz prism monochromator (Zeiss MQ3), photomultiplier, and an electronic data acquisition system. Compared to the earlier work of ref 8, more accurate absorption coefficients of CF2 are now available, which allows for a more quantitative analysis of CF2 yields recorded in the reaction. Reaction mixtures between 100 and 1000 ppm of CF3I in Ar were employed and used as described in ref 4. CF2 absorption–time profiles were followed at wavelengths in the range 230–270 nm, mostly at 248 nm, i.e., at the maximum of the broad absorption continuum. Typical signals are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The shown absorption signals ODS correspond to the product ODS = \( x \cdot [CF_2] \), where \( x = 9.4 \) cm and \( \varepsilon \) is the absorption coefficient of the Lambert–Beer law in the form \( I = I_0 \exp(–ODS) \). The absorption behind the incident wave in Figure 1 is due to the precursor CF3. At the temperature of the incident wave (977 K), the decomposition of CF3I just becomes noticeable. At the temperature of the reflected wave (1874 K), CF3I almost instantaneously dissociates and only the formation of CF2 is recorded. In Figure 2, the formation of CF2 behind the reflected wave at 2048 K is rapid and just becomes separable from the Schlieren peak of the shock front. After CF3 dissociation, CF2 is essentially stable for the observation time of about 1.3 ms in Figure 1. In Figure 2, CF3 dissociation starts to become noticeable, like those investigated in more detail in ref 3.

The approach to the final level of CF2 could always be represented in the form

\[
[CF_2] = [CF_2]_{\infty} (1 - \exp(-kt))
\]

The final CF2 concentration, \([CF_2]_{\infty}\), over the full range of precursor concentrations \([CF_3I]_{\infty}\) (100–1000 ppm of CF3I in Ar) near 1900 K was found to be mostly of the order of 1/2 \([CF_3I]_{\infty}\) but increased to values near \([CF_3I]_{\infty}\) when the temperature was increased to values above 2000 K. This observation indicates that not only the unimolecular dissociation 1 was taking place but that secondary reactions like

\[
F + CF_3(\text{Ar}) \rightarrow CF_2(\text{Ar})
\]

partly removed CF3 by conversion into the thermally more stable CF4, which does not absorb noticeably over the employed wavelength range. In addition to reaction 7, speculation about other secondary reactions was made in ref 3 but a quantitative analysis was difficult in that work. The work of ref 2, employing the dissociation of CF3I in the presence of H2O, focused on contributions of OH, O, and H to the CF3/CF2/F system but, for the higher temperatures applied, could neglect reaction 7 and other reactions of the pure CF3 system. Besides reaction 7, the present analysis of the CF3 dissociation shows that the reverse of reaction 1

\[
F + CF_2(\text{Ar}) \rightarrow CF_3(\text{Ar})
\]

has to be taken into account. A possible influence of iodine atoms in the chain

\[
I + CF_2 \rightarrow IF + CF_3
\]
considered in ref 4 is also inspected. Reaction 8 would reduce the final CF$_2$ yield, $Y$(CF$_2$) = [CF$_2$]$_{\infty}$/[CF$_3$]$_{\infty}$ to values below 1/2 as long as steady state of F atoms is established in the sequence of reactions 1 and 7. On the other hand, the CF$_2$ yield would increase when reactions 9 and 10 are important. Besides the effective rate constant $k$ in eq 6, the CF$_2$ yield $Y$(CF$_2$), therefore, was of interest. The rate constants $k_1$ were derived from $k$ and $Y$(CF$_2$) by fitting the modeled [CF$_3$] profiles to the experimental observations; see the following details.

While temperatures between 1803 and 2204 K were applied in ref 2, the present work extended the temperature range to 1544–2106 K. Furthermore, the range of bath gas concentrations 2.06 × 10$^{-6}$ < [Kr] < 5.71 × 10$^{-6}$ mol cm$^{-3}$ from ref 2 in the present work was extended to 1.04 × 10$^{-3}$ < [Ar] < 9.28 × 10$^{-3}$ mol cm$^{-3}$. Consequently, deviation from the limiting low-pressure behavior became visible more clearly in the present work.

The difference between the rate constant $k_1$ for reaction 1 and the measured $k$ in eq 6 required a simulation of the mechanism of reactions 1, 7, and 8. A potential influence of the chain process (reactions 9 and 10) was also examined. The simulation of the mechanism used tabulated equilibrium constants $k_1$/$k_9$ from ref 11 and results for $k_2$ from ref 9 (values for $k_9$ and $k_{10}$ were only tentative; see ref 4). Modeled values of CF$_2$ yields $Y$ ranged between ~0.35 near 1750 K and 0.92 near 2100 K. One should note that even with reactant concentrations as low as 100 ppm (at temperatures near 1800 K), the effects of secondary bimolecular reactions could not be suppressed. Only at temperatures above 2000 K, the influence of secondary reactions decreased. Furthermore, at temperatures above 1600 K, no influence by reactions 9 and 10, which would have increased the CF$_2$ yield $Y$, was detected. The modeled kinetic profiles were characterized by a rapid initial increase of [CF$_3$] with time, represented by eq 6, followed by only minor changes of the absorption levels attained on a much slower time scale. As the main part of the profile was given by eq 6, modeled kinetic profiles are not shown here. The experimental $k$ and $Y$ through $k_1$ ~ $Yk$ were converted to $k_2$; minor deviations from this simple analysis, whenever observed in the kinetic modeling, were accounted for, but always were smaller than the experimental scattering.

Table 1 summarizes representative rate constants $k_1$ as determined in the described way. Near 1800 K, $k_1$/[Ar] is found to decrease by about a factor of 2, when [Ar] increases from about 10$^{-3}$ to 10$^{-2}$ mol cm$^{-3}$. The reaction was thus studied close to (but not quite at) the low-pressure limit. The present results for [Ar] ~ 10$^{-3}$ mol cm$^{-3}$ connect well with the results from ref 2 (for [Kr] ranging up to 5.6 × 10$^{-6}$ mol cm$^{-3}$). The dependence of $k_1$ on the bath gas concentrations [M] is illustrated in Figure 3, where experimental data from the present work (with M = Ar) and from ref 2 (with M = Kr) are compared with modeled falloff curves; see below. Falloff curves are shown for 1800 and 2000 K; small “temperature mismatches” in the figure were accounted for by the modeled temperature dependences of $k_1$ at the given [M]; the temperature dependences of $k_1$ for two values of [Ar] here are represented as

$$k_1 \propto \exp(-30200 K/T) s^{-1}$$  

at [Ar] ~ 10$^{-3}$ mol cm$^{-3}$ (for 1600–1800 K) and $k_1 \propto \exp(-29860 K/T) s^{-1}$

$$k_1 \propto \exp(-30200 K/T) s^{-1}$$

at [Ar] ~ 10$^{-5}$ mol cm$^{-3}$ (for 1800–2000 K). On the basis of these experimental results, complete falloff curves $k_1$ ([M], T) were obtained with the help of the theoretical modeling described in the following section.

### III. Modeling of Limiting Rate Constants

The present calculations of molecular parameters, as used for the modeling of rate constants, were performed at the G4//B3LYP/6-311+G(3df) ab initio level and, therefore, go beyond the less accurate G3//B3LYP/6-311G(d) calculations employed earlier. Our procedure follows that described in detail in ref 4 and is not repeated here (details of the calculations are given in the Supporting Information). Morse parameters of the CF$_2$–F potential $V(r)$ were found to be $\beta_1 = 2.42$ Å$^{-1}$ (over the range 1.25 $\leq r \leq 2.75$ Å) or $\beta_2 = 2.90$ Å$^{-1}$ (over the range 2.0 $\leq r \leq 2.75$ Å). The frequencies of the two torsional transitional modes were found to decay exponentially with increasing bond length $r$ (decay parameters of $\alpha = 1.71$ and

Table 1. Representative Experimental Rate Constants for the Dissociation of CF$_3$ ([CF$_3$]$_{\infty}$/[Ar]) in ppm; $T$ in K; [Ar] in mol cm$^{-3}$; Rate Constants $k_1$ in s$^{-1}$ Corrected for Secondary Reactions Contributing to $k$ in eq 6, see Text; $Y$ = [CF$_2$]$_{\infty}$/[CF$_3$]$_{\infty}$

| [CF$_3$]$_{\infty}$/[Ar] | $T$ | [Ar] | $k_1$ | $Y$ |
|------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|
| 108                    | 1690 | 8.4 × 10$^{-3}$ | 1.2 × 10$^3$ | 0.35 |
| 108                    | 1742 | 7.8 × 10$^{-3}$ | 2.6 × 10$^3$ | 0.35 |
| 108                    | 1826 | 7.5 × 10$^{-3}$ | 8.4 × 10$^3$ | 0.43 |
| 108                    | 1885 | 7.1 × 10$^{-3}$ | 1.5 × 10$^4$ | 0.45 |
| 527                    | 1870 | 1.1 × 10$^{-3}$ | 3.0 × 10$^3$ | 0.61 |
| 527                    | 2024 | 9.8 × 10$^{-4}$ | 1.3 × 10$^3$ | 0.92 |
| 527                    | 2106 | 9.1 × 10$^{-4}$ | 2.1 × 10$^3$ | 0.93 |
| 527                    | 1743 | 7.8 × 10$^{-3}$ | 1.9 × 10$^4$ | 0.49 |
| 527                    | 1778 | 7.9 × 10$^{-3}$ | 3.4 × 10$^3$ | 0.46 |
| 527                    | 1943 | 7.0 × 10$^{-3}$ | 1.6 × 10$^4$ | 0.51 |
| 527                    | 2038 | 6.5 × 10$^{-3}$ | 4.3 × 10$^3$ | 0.59 |
| 1054                   | 1752 | 7.9 × 10$^{-3}$ | 7.5 × 10$^3$ | 0.54 |
| 1054                   | 1859 | 7.1 × 10$^{-3}$ | 4.7 × 10$^3$ | 0.54 |
| 1054                   | 1899 | 7.1 × 10$^{-3}$ | 1.2 × 10$^4$ | 0.50 |
1.77 Å⁻¹ were derived), such that the ratio α/β, was found to be near 0.6. This ratio is only slightly above the “standard value” of 0.5²¹ used in ref 3. Using molecular parameters for CF₃ and CF₂ as given in the Supporting Information, and the derived value of α/β, the limiting high-pressure rate constant was determined with the help of the classical trajectory version of the statistical adiabatic channel model (SACM/QT).¹³ Values of

\[ k_{1,\infty} = 1.6 \times 10^{16} (T/2000 \text{ K})^{-1.3} \exp(-43250 \text{ K}/T) \text{ s}^{-1} \]  

(13)

were obtained, approximately corresponding to

\[ k_{1,\infty} \approx 4.6 \times 10^{15} \exp(-40760 \text{ K}/T) \text{ s}^{-1} \]  

(14)

The apparent activation energy of \( k_{1,\infty} \) (339 kJ mol⁻¹) thus is not far from the threshold energy of reaction 1, i.e., 347.7 kJ mol⁻¹; see the Supporting Information. The rate constant of the reverse recombination of F with CF₂ followed as

\[ k_{-1,\infty} = 1.0 \times 10^{14} (T/2000 \text{ K})^{0.09} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \]  

(15)

Using an alternative quantum-chemical approach to the potential and variational transition state theory (VRC-TST), \( k_{1,\infty} \) (2000 K) in ref 2 was calculated to be \( 2.22 \times 10^{13} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \). The difference of about a factor of 4.5 between the two approaches to \( k_{1,\infty} \) has only a small influence on the experimentally observed part of the falloff curves. Nevertheless, it deserves an explanation, which is given in the Supporting Information.

Limiting low-pressure rate constants \( k_{1,0} \) in the present work were obtained with the method of ref 7, fitting the average energy \( \langle \Delta E \rangle \) transferred per collision with the help of the experimental results shown in Figure 3 and accounting for centrifugal barriers with the \( r^2 \)-dependent rotational constants of CF₂ given in the Supporting Information. Values of \( -\langle \Delta E \rangle/\hbar c \approx 300 \text{ cm}^{-1} \) were fitted and, at least for the studied temperature range, were assumed to be independent of the temperature. Over the range 1500–2500 K, this led to rate constants

\[ k_{1,0} = [\text{Ar}]2.5 \times 10^{18} (T/2000 \text{ K})^{-5.1} \exp(-42450 \text{ K}/T) \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \]  

(16)

which can be approximated by

\[ k_{1,0} = [\text{Ar}]2.5 \times 10^{16} \exp(-32835 \text{ K}/T) \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \]  

(17)

The master-equation approach of ref 2 over the range 1300–2500 K has given

\[ k_{1,0} = [\text{Kr}]2.38 \times 10^{24} (T/298 \text{ K})^{-6.362} \exp(-45649 \text{ K}/T) \text{ cm}^3 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1} \]  

(18)

such that \( k_{1,0} \) (2000 K) = [Kr] 1.6 \times 10⁸ cm³ mol⁻¹ s⁻¹, in comparison to \( k_{1,0} \) (2000 K) = [Ar] 1.5 \times 10⁹ cm³ mol⁻¹ s⁻¹ from the present modeling. A value of \( -\langle \Delta E \rangle/\hbar c \approx 420 \text{ cm}^{-1} \) was estimated in ref 2, which corresponds to a collision efficiency \( \beta_r \) (2000 K) \approx 0.16, close to the value \( \beta_r \) (2000 K) \approx 0.11 in the present calculation. The agreement between the two quite different approaches to \( k_{1,0} \) thus appears quite satisfactory (one should note that the differences of the collision frequencies for M = Ar and Kr as well as the differences of \( \langle \Delta E \rangle \) are only of minor importance).

IV. MODELED FALLOFF CURVES

Besides \( k_{1,0} \) and \( F_{\text{cent}} \), center broadening factors \( F_{\text{cent}} ^c \) enter the falloff expressions (reactions 3–5). As before,¹ we estimate their strong collision contribution \( F_{\text{cent}} ^{c\infty} \) by the method of ref 14, while a weak-collision contribution \( F_{\text{cent}} ^{c\infty} \approx 0.64 \) in \( F_{\text{cent}} \approx F_{\text{cent}} ^{c\infty} \) follows from ref 5. The resulting values here are \( F_{\text{cent}} \approx 0.25, 0.22, \) and 0.20 for \( T = 1500, 2000, \) and 2500 K, respectively. A value of 0.27 was derived in ref 2 (the difference, however, is of only small practical relevance, because the present experiments were conducted close to the low-pressure limit of the reaction. The difference is related to the different \( k_{1,0} \) derived in the present work and in ref 2; see the Supporting Information).

In the following, two factors influencing the shape of the “broad” falloff curves of the present reaction are inspected: (i) differences between the falloff expressions of eq 3 (from strong-collision, rigid-activated complex, Rice–Ramsperger–Kassel–Marcus (RRKM) theory) and the falloff expressions of eqs 4 and 5 (from weak-collision master equations and loose-activated complex calculations) and (ii) differences due to different \( k_{1,0} \) and \( k_{1,\infty} \).

Figure 4 compares falloff curves constructed with the simple falloff curves from eq 3 and the more elaborate expressions of eqs 4 and 5 (using the same values of \( k_{1,0}, k_{1,\infty}, \) and \( F_{\text{cent}} \) as derived from the present modeling). The differences are clearly within the scatter of the experimental points shown in Figure 3 such that the simple eq 3 could be used as an alternative to eqs 4 and 5. Figure 5 provides a comparison of the present falloff curves with those from ref 2, employing markedly different values of \( k_{1,0} \). Although the experimental scatter precludes any safe conclusions on \( k_{1,0} \), the proximity of \( k_{1,0} \) to \( k_{1,0} \) is sufficient to permit a unique determination of \( -\langle \Delta E \rangle/\hbar c \) (within an estimated accuracy of about ±100 cm⁻¹).

V. CONCLUSIONS

It was shown that shock wave studies of the thermal dissociation of CF₃ from ref 2 and from the present work are consistent with each other, provided that the influence of the secondary reactions (7 and 8) are taken into account. An influence of reactions 9 and 10, involving IF as an intermediate, could not be detected. The deduced rate constant \( k_1 \) was shown to correspond to conditions close to the limiting low-
pressure rate constant $k_{1,0}$ of the reaction. The influences of different falloff expressions (eq 3 vs eqs 4 and 5) and of different high-pressure rate constants $k_{1,0}$ on the evaluation of $k_{1,0}$ were investigated. Although the experimental scatter was apparently larger than the modeling differences of the falloff analysis, the present determination of a value of the total average energy $\langle \Delta E \rangle$ transferred per collision with the bath gas Ar, i.e., $-\langle \Delta E \rangle/hc \approx 300$ cm$^{-1}$ ($\pm 100$) cm$^{-1}$, seems well founded. Although this value is somewhat higher than usually observed (see refs 4, 15), it does not appear unreasonable (the experiments from ref 2 for M = Kr would be evaluated with a very similar value of $\langle \Delta E \rangle$).

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information
The Supporting Information is available free of charge at https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.jpca.9b10393.

Modeling of the Potential Energy Surface; Modeling of the Rate Constants; Molecular Parameters (PDF)

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Notes
The authors declare no competing financial interest.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Financial support of this work from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Project TR 09/20-1) is gratefully acknowledged.

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