CORRESPONDENCE

Wastage of Skill in the US

SIR,—The doctrine has been announced by the US government, and publicly supported by some politicians, scientific administrators and even scientists, that the present scarcity of jobs for technically trained men and women is the result of training too many people. I argue that this shortage is artificial, unnecessary, and caused by deliberate governmental policy to save money.

We have been through this before in the great depression of the 1930s. The cause is known, also the cure. Essential national needs are neglected on all sides, for example, in staffing the ever-expanding institutions of higher education, improving the nation's transportation system in all its forms, salvaging what is left of the inner cities, trying to prevent the impending crisis in energy supplies, bringing health care to every citizen whether rich or poor or in between, conserving our natural resources, and providing an adequate standard of living for all in the richest nation on Earth.

The answer is to carry on useful programmes, financed by both public and private sources, including both basic and applied research in universities, governmental laboratories and industrial organizations. To do these things we need all the trained people we can get, and at all levels. Ours is a technological culture and the way to keep it going is by expanded scientific effort, not by killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

There is no fat cat more content to put up with things as they are than an academic with tenure. I am deeply disturbed that many of my colleagues seem to accept without question the doctrine of over-production of trained people, when the true state of affairs is deliberate

under-utilization, reversible by US governmental action. Where would the money come from? The answer is obvious. Stop the war that has killed or wounded a quarter of a million US men, squandered our resources, ruined Vietnam and degraded the US before the world. All this has not cost either China or Russia a single man, nor has it hindered their scientific and technical growth. We in the US, on the other hand, are seeing our strength waste away under misguided governmental policy.

Yours faithfully,

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Biochemistry: *IJB* and *EJB*

SIR,—A recent issue of *Nature* (226, 51; 1970) contains a review by Dr J. H. Morris of the newly launched *International Journal of Biochemistry* (*IJB*). The review concludes with the statement that "So long as proliferation is the watchword of communication, the only choice is between more issues of the same journals or the addition of new ones. To judge from the progress of recent starters such as the *European Journal of Biochemistry* (*EJB*), the subject is big enough for all comers and their respective fates will ultimately depend on the standard of excellence they attain".

I was closely involved with the creation of the *EJB*, being the chairman of the committee that recommended its formation, and secretary-general of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies at the time that this recommendation was

accepted. I do not think that there should be any comparison of the *EJB* with *IJB*.

The *EJB* is not a "new" journal, in the sense that its creation did not add to the number of existing journals. On the proposal of the Gesellschaft für Biologische Chemie, Springer-Verlag agreed with FEBS to abandon publication of the *Biochemische Zeitschrift*, with its long and distinguished history, in return for becoming publishers of the *EJB*.

There are, in addition, a number of equally important criteria that serve to distinguish the *EJB* from the *IJB*. The *EJB* was only established after the widest consultation within the member societies of FEBS, representing several thousand European biochemists. Its scientific policy is entirely in the control of the federated societies and the continuity of that control is assured through the FEBS Publications Committee, and the journal's editorial and advisory boards—numbering some 70 biochemists from Europe and the United States. The situation of the *IJB* is very different. It is a private venture with an editorial board of two, from the same university department. It received at least some of its start in life from manuscripts originally submitted to *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology* and resubmitted to the *IJB*. (The two journals share a common editor.) It is relevant here to note that in his review of the *IJB* Dr Morris pointed out that "Each biochemical journal seems to acquire for itself a characteristic slant—the accent in this first issue is very much on comparative enzymology and metabolism".

Yours faithfully,

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Announcements

University News

Mark Ptashne has been appointed professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at Harvard University.

Mrs Kathleen Bell has been appointed to the second chair of social studies in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Dr L. J. Challis has been appointed to the third chair of physics and Mr E. F. Williams has been appointed special professor of food hygiene in the Department of Applied Biochemistry and Nutrition, in the University of Nottingham.

Appointments

Professor P. G. Stein, Queen's College, Cambridge, has been appointed to the University Grants Committee.

Professor A. R. J. P. Ubbelohde, Imperial College, London, has been reappointed a member of the Agricultural Research Council.

Mr C. L. Old, group education officer to Vickers Limited, has been appointed assistant secretary to the Council of Engineering Institutions, in succession to Rear-Admiral I. G. Aylen.

Miscellaneous

A PRIZE of 5,000 Swiss francs will be awarded by the International Health Foundation for the best study submitted

to the foundation on the subject "Gonadal Function in Man between 45 and 55 Years of Age". Papers may deal with any aspect of this subject—clinical, social, or biochemical—and should contain new and original ideas. They should be written in English and should not exceed 2,500 words in length. Quality rather than quantity will influence the final selection. Papers, together with a short curriculum vitae of the author, should be sent to the International Health Foundation, 14 rue de Hollande, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland, to arrive by June 1, 1971. The results will be announced in August 1971. An additional prize of 2,000 Swiss francs may be awarded for the best paper submitted by an author under 35 if the quality of the entries permits.