CORRESPONDENCE

Price of Books

SIR,— You recently asked me to review a book for *Nature*. I was tempted to remark in the review that the book was very expensive. Then it occurred to me that nothing happens when reviews include such perfunctory remarks, and that anyway most scientific books are very expensive now. This led to wider questions. Do scientific authors, publishers, printers or booksellers make more money than they deserve at the expense of the scientific community? Does the system of advertising, whereby piles of letters reach me each month, add a lot to the prices of books? Should we scientists organize ourselves to prevent our exploitation by others? We grumble about the cost of books but do nothing. It is tempting to blame the publishers, but I, for one, would not deny them a fair profit, even if they may have subsidized the scientific community in the past.

It so happens that the book I reviewed was one of a series. (I think the name of the publishers is unimportant, because their prices do not seem unusual.) So I have plotted the year against the

Fig. 1 Rise in book prices: x, cost (£) per 100 pages; o, index of retail prices (all items, 1947=100).

publication price per 100 pages of each book of the series and against the index of retail prices—all items (Fig. 1). One can dispute the implication that this affords a fair comparison between what a book should cost and what it does, but nonetheless I think two conclusions are clear: the costs of living and of books were fairly consistent until the end of the sixties; rampant inflation

thereafter has affected books somewhat more than the cost of living. Should we organize a lobby, or be grateful that things are not worse than they are?

Yours faithfully,

P. G. DRAZIN

*School of Mathematics,
University Walk,
Bristol BS8 1TW*

Obituary

Richard J. Winzler

GLYCOPROTEIN research, cancer research and biomedical education suffered a severe loss with the sudden death of Richard J. Winzler on September 28, 1972.

Winzler was born in San Francisco on September 29, 1914. He received his early education in the San Francisco area and obtained his PhD from Stanford University in 1938, at the age of 23. Following this he was Sterling Fellow at Yale University (1938–1939) and National Research Council Fellow at the Wenner Gren Institute, Stockholm (1940–41). On the outbreak of the Second World War, Winzler returned to the USA to complete his NRC fellowship at the National Cancer Institute, Bethesda (1941–43). During this early period his interests began to change from considerations of metabolic reactions in normal cells, especially yeast, to studies of the biochemical changes which differentiate normal and malignant tissues.

Following these *Wanderjahren*,

Winzler was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California at Los Angeles in 1943 and rose through Associate Professor to Professor in 1949. In 1952 he was appointed Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.

Throughout this period of increasing burdens in teaching and administration, Winzler maintained an active role in research, continuing his studies on normal and abnormal metabolism, including the role of thyroxine, but with a developing emphasis in the field of glycoproteins in which he was to make his major contributions. In particular, he recognized the widespread distribution of glycoproteins in serum, developed methods for their isolation and characterization, and began studies on their structure and biosynthesis. He realized that sialic acid was a major determinant of glycoprotein structure and that the glycoprotein levels varied in certain pathological states. It is from this early work that some of our recent understanding on the role of carbo-

hydrate in glycoprotein function can be traced. At the same time Winzler continued his studies on biochemical changes in neoplastic tissue and extended these to studies of the biochemical effects of viral infections.

In 1965 Winzler accepted the position of Chairman and Professor at the Department of Biochemistry, School of Medicine, at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Despite the administrative burdens of extended planning for new medical, dental and research facilities this was probably the most productive period of his life, as his wide knowledge of glycoproteins became focused on the glycoproteins of cell membranes. A significant step forward in this area was made by his isolation of the major glycoproteins of the red cell membrane, their structural characterization and the elucidation of monosaccharide sequence in certain of their subunits. This led him to the development of a model for membrane glycoprotein structure, identical with that proposed at about the same time by Morawieki, in which the hetero-