

Who's Paid What

SIR,—With reference to your observations on the recent salary survey of the Royal Institute of Chemistry and related professional bodies (*Nature*, 220, 211; 1968), the comments you make are, I think, quite misleading. Unlike the full surveys, you appear to consider only median salaries. This causes, for example, the median for chemists in central government, age 26–30, to be £1,640, whereas the SSO grade (persons age on appointment 26–31) has a salary scale £1,866–£2,306, excluding London weighting. Clearly many chemists in central government are not on the SSO scale, but in other grades which lower the median. Considering, now, university staff, it might be reasonable to equate at age 30 the lecturer grade with SSO as requiring people of comparable ability. If this is so, comparison with the median salaries in industry, or central government, is quite misleading as the above figures show. A comparison might have been more realistic if in universities there was a comparable proportion of lower grades with a level of ability which qualified them for membership of the professional institutions. Such people would be mainly equivalent to technical officers and the like, of whom at present there are relatively few in universities.

If you consider that university staff as a whole should have no better median salary than the median in industry, perhaps you would make your arguments for this clear in your columns. If, however, you accept that the scientific officer scales of the civil service are a more acceptable comparison, I would point out that the career grade in the civil service (PSO) is much better than that in universities, which the National Incomes Commission took to be the lecturer grade, rising to a maximum of £2,630 at age 40, and for whom further promotion is limited by a quota of 35 per cent of the total academic staff.

Yours faithfully,
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Why do Students Fail?

SIR,—Mr Owens in his letter on “Why do Students Fail?” (*Nature*, 220, 517; 1968) raises some important points which have been and are being widely discussed. But one cannot allow his last paragraph to pass without comment.

I cannot claim to speak for every university, but I am sure that for the vast majority it is complete nonsense to state: “It is the university administrators who make the decisions on dismissing students and the academics who supply the courses. Maybe if there were more cooperation between the two, failure rates would go down”. At Bristol (and I am confident at most universities) these decisions are made by the boards of faculties which are composed entirely of academics under the chairmanship of the dean of faculty. Even in the least democratic university of which I have knowledge, the decision is taken by the dean after consultation with the head of department. If Mr Owens classes the deans as university administrators he should remember that in British universities deans are academics on whom the temporary (and often heavy) load of faculty administration has been imposed. There are, I believe, few schizophrenics among us, and in coming to decisions on the progress of students, what is best for the student's future, both academic and personal, is given overriding consideration.

Yours faithfully,
D. H. EVERETT

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University News

Professor O. T. Solbrig, Michigan, has been appointed professor of botany in **Harvard University**.

Dr Peter Kunkler, Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff, has been appointed professor and head of the Department of Radiotherapy in the **University of Leeds**.

Dr G. Matthews, Nuffield Foundation, has been appointed to the Shell chair of mathematics education tenable at **Chelsea College of Science and Technology**. The title of professor of bacteriology has been conferred on **Dr C. H. Lack** in respect of his post at the **Institute of Orthopaedics**.

Professor Paul E. Gray of the Department of Electrical Engineering has been appointed Class of 1922 Professor at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**. He succeeds **Professor John Wulff** of the Department of Metallurgy and Materials Science who retired in June.

Dr A. M. Thomson has been appointed to a personal professorship in social obstetrics in the **University of Newcastle upon Tyne**.

Appointments

Dr A. A. Moss has been appointed keeper of mineralogy and **Dr J. D. H. Wiseman** deputy keeper of mineralogy in the **British Museum (Natural History)**.

Dr W. W. Rubey, California, has been appointed director of the **Lunar Science Institute** in Houston, Texas. The chief objective of the institute, which was established in March this year, is to provide a base for scientists taking part in the lunar exploration programme, working in the Lunar Receiving Laboratory or using other facilities of the Manned Spacecraft Centre devoted to study of the moon.

Announcements

The Geological Society of America has awarded the **Penrose Medal** to **Professor John Tuzo Wilson**, professor of geophysics in the University of Toronto, for his research in pure geology. The **Arthur L. Day Medal** has been awarded to **Dr F. J. Vine** of the Department of Geological and Geophysical Sciences at Princeton University, for his contributions to geological knowledge made through the application of physics and chemistry to geological problems.

Dr F. J. C. Roe has been awarded a gold medal by the scientific council of Centro Sociale Studio Precancerosi in recognition of his research in the field of carcinogenesis. The medal was presented on October 5 during the second International Seminarium on Cancer Prophylaxis.

ERRATUM. In the advertisement under the heading “Finite Differences” on page xxv of this issue, *A Treatise on Differential Equations* by A. R. Forsyth costs £1 15s; the edition of *Theoretical Hydrodynamics* by L. M. Milne-Thomson which has just been published is the fifth edition and costs £5 5s.

ERRATUM. In the News and Views article “Dividends for Societies” (*Nature*, 220, 5; 1968) it was wrongly stated that the Fulmer Research Institute was in Sussex. It is, of course, in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire.

ERRATUM. In the obituary notice of Professor J. E. Harris (*Nature*, 220, 626; 1968) it was incorrectly stated that Professor Harris died on July 1, 1968—he died on June 24.

International Meetings

December 4, **Preparation of Analytical Papers for Publication**, London (The Society for Analytical Chemistry, 9-10 Savile Row, London W1).

December 16, **Atomic Scattering Resonance Effects**, London (The Meetings Officer, Institute of Physics and the Physical Society, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1).

January 7-8, **Recent Advances in Inorganic Reaction Mechanisms**, Manchester (The Registrar, The University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, PO Box No 88, Manchester M60 1QD).

January 7-9, **Orbital Symmetry Correlations in Organic Reactions**, Cambridge (Dr J. R. Gibson, The Chemical Society, Burlington House, London W1V 0BN).

January 8-9, **Adsorption from Solution**, Manchester (The Registrar, The University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, PO Box No. 88, Manchester M60 1QD).

February 13, **Preparation of Thin Films by the Method of Sputtering**, London (The Meetings Officer, Institute of Physics and the Physical Society, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1).

March 23-24, **Laser Safety**, Cincinnati (Dr Leon Goldman, Laser Laboratory, Medical Center, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45229, USA).

March 25-27, **Interactions among Elementary Excitations in Solids and Liquids**, Nottingham (The Meetings Officer, Institute of Physics and the Physical Society, 47 Belgrave Square, London SW1).

March 25-28, **Autoclaved Calcium Silicate Building Materials**, Hannover (Secretariat of the 2nd International Symposium 1969, "Haus der Kalksandsteinindustrie", PO Box 210 160-3 Hannover-Herrenhausen, Germany).

April 9-11, **Technical Advances in Gas Turbine Design**, Warwick (International Combustion Engines Group, Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 1 Birdcage Walk, London SW1).

April 9-11, **Logopedics**, Rome (Professor J. Van Den Eeckhaut, Hôpital Saint-Pierre, 69 rue de Bruxelles, Louvain, Belgium).

April 13-18, **Fracture**, Brighton (R. W. Nichols, UKAEA, Reactor Materials Laboratory, Wigshaw Lane, Culcheth, Warrington, Lancashire).

April 13-23, **Irrigation and Drainage**, Mexico (Ing. Manuel Anaya Sorribas, Reforma 69-Piso 12, Mexico 1, DF, Mexico).

April 15-16, **Crystallization**, London (The Institution of Chemical Engineers, 16 Belgrave Square, London SW1).

April 15-17, **Civil Engineering Problems of the South Wales Valleys**, Cardiff (The Institute of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, London SW1).

April 15-18, **Computer Aided Design**, Southampton (Conference Department, Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, London WC2).

April 16-17, **Feeding and Nutrition of Animals**, Milan (Professor T. Bonnadonna, Società Italiana per 11 Progresso della Zootecnica, Via Monte Ortigara N 35, Milan, Italy).

April 21-25, **Structure, Solid Mechanics and Engineering Design in Civil Engineering Design in Civil Engineering Materials**, Southampton (M. Te'eni, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Southampton, Southampton).

April 25-27, **Biological Chemistry**, Mosbach (Dr H. Gibian, Secretary General, Society for Biological Chemistry, Mullerstr. 170-172, 1 Berlin 65, Germany).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(Meetings marked with an asterisk are open to the public)

From December 7, 1968, meetings and other events in this column will be restricted to meetings at which attendance is not confined to members of particular societies.

Monday, November 25

ROYAL INSTITUTION (at 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1), at 2.30 p.m.—Professor G. Porter, FRS: "Thermodynamics and Chemical Change" (Civil Service Lecture).

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (at the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill, London, NW7), at 4.30 p.m.—Professor Herman N. Eisen (Washington University): "Degeneracy in the Immune Response to a Simple Determinant".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Discussion meeting on "Using Vocational Selection Tests in Industry", opened by Mr J. Copeland.

INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS, INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE GROUP (at 1 Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London, SW1), at 6 p.m.—Discussion meeting on "What are the Barriers to Piston Speed for the Diesel Engine?"

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS (at John Adam Street, Adelphi, London, WC2), at 6 p.m.—Dr A. H. Cottrell, FRS: "Science and Technology" (second of three Cantor Lectures on "Technology in Great Britain").

PLASTICS INSTITUTE, REINFORCED PLASTICS SUBGROUP (at the "Coach-makers Arms", 88 Marylebone Lane, London, W1), at 7.30 p.m.—Mr J. M. M. Winkelman: "GRP versus Pressure Diecastings".

Monday, November 25—Tuesday, November 26

INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS, AUTOMOBILE DIVISION (at 1 Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London, SW1)—Symposium on "Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control".

Tuesday, November 26

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Mr D. W. Draper and Mr R. J. Goodridge: "A Thyristor Supplied Tandem Cold Mill".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (joint meeting with the Automatic Control Group of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, at 1 Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London, SW1), at 6 p.m.—Discussion Meeting on "Designing Servos that work on Machine Tools".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRONIC AND RADIO ENGINEERS, INSTRUMENTATION AND CONTROL GROUP (at 9 Bedford Square, London, WC1), at 6 p.m.—Mr J. Agar: "Frequency Modulating Transducers".

SOCIETY OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY, PLASTICS AND POLYMER GROUP (at 14 Belgrave Square, London, SW1), at 6 p.m.—Dr C. B. Bucknall: "Mechanism of Yielding and Fracture in ABS".

SOCIETY FOR ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY, PARTICLE SIZE ANALYSIS GROUP (in the Physics Building, Imperial College of Science and Technology, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7), at 6.30 p.m.—Meeting on "Adsorption Methods of Surface Area Measurement". Dr C. H. Giles: "Determination of Surface Area by Dye Adsorption"; Mr A. J. Groszek: "Determination of Surface Areas by Flow Calorimetry".

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, DEPARTMENT OF EXTRA MURAL STUDIES; and the LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON (at the Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1), at 6.30 p.m.—Dr R. Bellairs: "The Beginnings of Embryology". (Ninth of twelve lectures on "The Historical Background to Modern Zoology".)

INSTITUTION OF THE RUBBER INDUSTRY (at the Eccleston Hotel, Eccleston Square, London, SW1), at 7 p.m.—Mr M. Williams: "Value Analysis—a Management Technique".

Tuesday, November 26—Wednesday, November 27

IRON AND STEEL INSTITUTE (at the Royal Garden Hotel, London, W8)—Autumn General Meeting. Technical session on "The Challenge for Steel".

Wednesday, November 27

ROYAL SOCIETY (at 6 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1), at 10 a.m.—Discussion meeting on "Cosmic X-ray Astronomy".

ROYAL INSTITUTION, HISTORY OF SCIENCE DISCUSSION GROUP (at 21 Albemarle Street, London, W1), at 1 p.m.—Dr W. T. Stearn: "Measurement in Botany".*

INSTITUTE OF NAVIGATION (at the Royal Institution of Naval Architects, 10 Upper Belgrave Street, London, SW1), at 5 p.m.—Captain D. S. Tibbits, DSC: "The Control of Traffic in the Entrances to Ports".

INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS; and BRITISH SECTION—INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING (at Great George Street, London, SW1), at 5.30 p.m.—Informal Discussion on "Engineering Aspects of the Turkish Earthquake, 1967", introduced by Dr N. Ambraseys.

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS (at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 5.30 p.m.—Mr P. D. Mathewman and Professor H. Nicholson: "Techniques for Load Prediction in the Electricity Supply Industry".

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRONIC AND RADIO ENGINEERS, COMMUNICATIONS GROUP (at 9 Bedford Square, London, WC1), at 6 p.m.—Mr S. Welsh: "World Telephone Communication".

INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS (at 1 Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London, SW1), at 6 p.m.—Mr A. F. Earle: "Management and the Engineer" (Thomas Hawksley Lecture).

INSTITUTION OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS, LONDON GRADUATE AND STUDENT SECTION (joint meeting with the Graduate and Student Section of the Institution of Chemical Engineers, at Savoy Place, London, WC2), at 6.30 p.m.—Dr A. R. Blake: "New Uses of Electricity in Chemical Synthesis".

Thursday, November 28

INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS, RAILWAY ENGINEERING GROUP (at 1 Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London, SW1)—All-day Meeting on "Hydrostatic and Hydrodynamic Transmission".