

ments and limitations of earlier cultures are discussed, modern scientific method is studied and the relevance of the successful study of the physical world to economic development made clear.

This course, originally confined to Swaneng Hill School, has now been accepted for the syllabus of the Junior Certificate of the Examinations Council of the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland for a trial period of four years and a textbook will shortly be published in draft form.

It is too early to assess fully the results of this combined approach to the problem of magico-mythical beliefs. To date we find that most students go through a phase in which they accept what is learnt in school without entirely relinquishing their earlier beliefs, but the balance between the two attitudes changes until, by the end of the fifth year, there is an active looking for physical causes of events and a real eagerness to apply their knowledge of science to the solution of local economic problems.

True, our students retain a great many superstitious beliefs, but then so do many European students—it is surely the balance which is important.

Yours faithfully,

SHEILA BAGNALL

Swaneng Hill School,
Serowe,
Botswana,
and 22 Nevern Road,
London SW5.

Potent LSD

SIR,—John Toozé's review of *The Day of St Anthony's Fire* by John G. Fuller (*Nature*, 222, 495; 1969) is an entertaining story of what has been thought to have been an outbreak of ergotism which struck 230 inhabitants of Pont-Saint-Esprit in August 1951 and killed five. Since most people have only access to the review but not the book, I would like to clarify some of the points which may not have been available to either author or reviewer, both of whom believe that LSD in the flour was the culprit.

LSD-25 is not "produced by *Claviceps purpurea* in some conditions of fermentation", but *Claviceps paspali* in submerged culture can yield lysergic acid methyl carbinolamide, a derivative of LSD. The mass poisoning through flour, however, has been shown to be entirely unrelated to ergot and its derivatives—including LSD—as evidenced from the unequivocal negative findings on bread samples which were collected personally by Dr A. Hofmann—the discoverer of LSD—immediately after the catastrophe. (According to a personal letter dated August 7, 1960, from Dr Artur Brack, Vice-Director of Research at the Pharmaceutical Departments at Sandoz, Basel, and a friend and colleague of Dr A. Hofmann.) The culpable compound was in fact identified as a mercury guanidine derivative (trade name 'Panogen') intended for the protection of grain from insects.

The initial rise in the number of overly favourable publications on a new medical discovery is usually followed by a nearly exponential decay as a function of time and an overly critical attitude. No wonder, then, that LSD is now the fashionable scape-goat for dramatic evils past and present.

Yours faithfully,

ROLAND FISCHER

Departments of Psychiatry and Pharmacology,
College of Medicine,
The Ohio State University,
Columbus, Ohio 43210.

University News

Dr M. H. Harmel has been appointed chairman of the newly created department of anaesthesiology at the **University of Chicago**.

Dr R. N. Zare, University of Colorado, has been appointed professor of chemistry at **Columbia University**.

Dr M. S. Losowsky has been appointed professor of medicine at St James's Hospital, **University of Leeds**.

Dr A. K. Holliday has been appointed to the Grant professorship of inorganic chemistry at the **University of Liverpool**.

The title of professor of biochemistry has been conferred on **Dr J. B. Jepson** in respect of his post at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, **University of London**.

The title of professor of industrial sociology has been conferred on **Miss Joan Woodward** in respect of her post at Imperial College of Science and Technology, **University of London**.

Professor Sir Hedley Atkins has accepted the invitation of the council of Queen Elizabeth College, **University of London**, to become its chairman in succession to the late Sir Thomas Creed.

Dr P. E. Palmer, University of Capetown, has been appointed professor of radiology at the **University of Pennsylvania**.

Dr A. H. Jackson, University of Liverpool, has been appointed to the chair of organic chemistry at University College, Cardiff, **University of Wales**.

Dr D. Bellamy, University of Sheffield, has been appointed to the chair of zoology at University College, Cardiff, **University of Wales**.

Dr A. Sabin, Cincinnati University, has been elected president of the **Weizmann Institute of Science**, Rehovot, Israel.

Appointments

Dr R. J. Mackin, jun., has been appointed manager of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Space Sciences Division, California. He succeeds **Dr D. P. Burcham**, who has been named development manager for space science in the laboratory's office of Research and Advanced Development.

Dr W. E. Duckworth has been appointed director of research at the **Fulmer Research Institute** in succession to Mr E. A. G. Liddiard, the first director, who will remain on the board as a consultant to the institute.

Announcements

Professor S. T. Butler, University of Sydney, **Professor G. W. K. Cavill**, University of New South Wales, **Professor D. P. Craig**, Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University, **Professor A. R. Main**, University of Western Australia, **Dr D. Metcalf**, Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, Melbourne, **Dr B. Morris**, Australian National University, **Professor Hanna Neumann**, School of General Studies, Australian National University, **Dr H. C. Coombs**, Australian National University, and **Sir Maurice Mawby**, Conzinc Riotinto of Australia, Limited, have been elected fellows of the Australian Academy of Science. **Dr D. F. Martyn** has been elected president of the Australian Academy of Science, **Professor A. J. Birch** has been elected treasurer, **Professor G. M. Badger** secretary (physical sciences), **Professor R. J. Walsh** secretary (biological sciences) and **Dr A. L. G. Rees** secretary (international relations).

Professor Ephraim Katchalski, Weizmann Institute of Science, has been selected as the second recipient of the **Linderstrøm-Lang Gold Medal**.