

He inspired many younger workers, and they will miss him dearly.

There are some today who look with condescension on the study of natural history. They would do well to consider the quality and magnitude of Cyril Diver's contribution to biological science. He was an amateur giant who survived into an age of professional midgets.

Correspondence

Once More Round the Course

SIR,—I should be grateful if you would allow me to make a few comments on your leading article of May 24 on the Select Committee on Science and Technology (*Nature*, 222, 709; 1969).

This committee, unlike others set up when Mr Crossman was Leader of the House of Commons, was the outcome of continuing pressure brought to bear by the All-Party Parliamentary and Scientific Committee over two or more years. Having been a member of the Select Committee since its initiation, I am a little surprised to read your suggestion that the durability of the Select Committee "owes something to the way in which it tends to chase harmless hares". Certainly it is not my experience that we have in any way sought to exercise a "facility for blunting the edge of justifiable criticism". Our report on the United Kingdom Nuclear Reactor Programme, for example, in paragraph 154, expressed concern that neither the Minister of Power nor the Minister of Technology appeared to have any very effective technical check on the activities of the AEA and the consequent allocation of public funds for the authority's purpose. Also in paragraph 118, we recommended the winding up of the British Nuclear Export Executive which we felt might all too easily "provide an excuse for failure to face up to export realities and, where there are weaknesses, to take steps to put matters right", and we saw "in particular the apparent failure to examine in detail the scope of the world market for British nuclear goods".

In connexion with the letting of the Hinkley Point (B) Station, we concluded "that the CEGB were at fault in not going out to competitive tender in the first instance" and that "the Minister of Power should have used the sanction he had already used in holding back the date of consent to suggest to the Board that they should give the other consortia an opportunity to tender, in order to ensure that the work was to be carried out as cheaply as possible".

In paragraph 98, we also referred to "a serious weakness of present British energy policy", namely the lack of full consultation with the oil industry and of an examination by an independent outside agency of the purely financial aspects of costing of all methods of energy supply.

The foregoing are but a small selection of various critical observations by the committee which seem to me to belie your accusation that we have tended "to chase harmless hares" or blunt the edge of justifiable criticism.

May I also remind you that there was one matter on which the committee was not entirely unanimous—namely the recommendation for a single organization to take the place of the old consortia and the AEA. By the narrow majority of seven votes to five (Mr David Ginsburg abstaining and the chairman not voting) an amendment moved by Mr David Price was defeated. It would have had the effect of allowing a market solution to decide the future structure "recognizing that any re-grouping will only be realistic if it is based on sound

commercial and managerial experience, especially exporting experience gained in the capital goods markets". It now seems that this is basically the policy which will be followed.

I must not, of course, comment on the present work of the sub-committee, of which I am chairman, which is looking into the operations of the Natural Environment Research Council, reports of whose proceedings you have been so gratifyingly carrying in your last five issues.

Perhaps, however, I may be allowed to make a few observations on the work of the Sub-Committee on Coastal Pollution of which I was also chairman and which reported on July 26, 1968. In January 1969, the Government published Cmnd. 3880 which contained their observations on this report. The Government's observations amply demonstrate their awareness of the sharpness of the edge of our criticism. The continuing incidence of oil pollution round our shores since we reported has, I suggest, re-emphasized the importance of our constructive criticisms, but so far we have not been able to persuade the Leader of the House to provide an opportunity for debating our report and the Government's observations on it.

I hope, however, that you will accept my assurance that the "hares" we had to chase were certainly not harmless.

Yours faithfully,

H. LEGGE-BOURKE

House of Commons,
London SW1.

International Laboratory Needed

SIR,—Your case for an "international molecular biology laboratory modelled along the lines of CERN" (*Nature*, 222, 836; 1969) would be indisputable if, like CERN, molecular biology needs equipment and facilities beyond the financial capabilities of individual member states. I am not convinced that this is so. Nor am I yet convinced that the establishment of one very large laboratory, somewhere in Europe and possibly not associated with a university, is the best way of advancing knowledge in molecular biology, of educating young scientists for teaching and research in this field, of stopping the brain drain, or (if such sums were available) of most effectively spending \$16 million over seven years.

There are alternatives to the EMBO proposals, already hinted at in the Kendrew Committee's report (Cmnd. 3675), which are at least worth examining. Your description of those who refuse blindly to swallow the EMBO prescription as "a short-sighted fifth column" suggests that you, also, have restricted your field of vision.

Yours faithfully,

H. L. KORNBERG

Department of Biochemistry,
University of Leicester.

Appointments

Dr Arthur Newcombe Bourns, McMaster University, **Jean-Paul Gignac**, Sidbec, Montreal, **Dr G. W. Holbrook**, Nova Scotia Technical College, **Eric W. Leaver**, Electronic Associates of Canada, Limited, and **Dr H. D. B. Wilson**, University of Manitoba, have been appointed members of the National Research Council of Canada. **Dr Lucien Piché** has been reappointed for a three-year term, and **Dr J. Milton Ham**, University of Toronto, will take up his appointment on July 1.

Professor Kurt Hoselitz has been appointed director of the Mullard Research Laboratories. He has been deputy director since 1964, and joined the Mullard Research Laboratories in 1952 to establish the solid state physics division.