

# Correspondence

## International Laboratory

SIR.—Dr Kornberg's criticism of an EMBO laboratory (*Nature*, 222, 1102; 1969) is not as valid, I would think, as it appears. We should ask ourselves whether any single government would be agreeable to the financing of the resources which will be required to undertake, properly, any one of the research projects which EMBO might consider.

Thus, the molecular mechanism of evolution, of complete cell metabolism or of memory and reasoning power, are programmes requiring supplies of biological materials and of scientific know-how of such tremendous variety that I seriously question if any one country could hope to make them available for any national research effort and (even less) would be agreeable to doing so. Presently such excursions into these fields of research are enabled mainly by exchange of material and personnel between Europe and America, but a major incentive for an EMBO laboratory is large scale intra-Europe collaboration of this type with the consequential moderation of the leakage of exceedingly valuable fundamental knowledge across the Atlantic where it is quickly and efficiently exploited to our (Europe's) economic disadvantage.

Yours faithfully,

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## Cost of Living

SIR.—Most people who have lived for any length of time in the US will have read Dr V. C. Reddish's letter (*Nature*, 222, 1009; 1969) on comparative living costs with amazement, if not incredulity. The suggested equivalence of \$10 to £1, in respect to rented housing, would imply that a one-bedroom furnished apartment, such as may be obtained in the US for, say, \$140 per month, could be rented in England for £14; or that a house costing \$22,000, with three bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, double garage and rumpus room, could be bought in England for £3,600.

The figure of \$7.1 given for the motoring equivalent of £1 is sheer fantasy. The current price for a new Ford Cortina two-door de luxe in the US is \$1,873; gasoline costs between 27c and 50c per (British) gallon; registration and third party insurance costs vary, but a typical value might be \$150 per annum; and while the American motorist probably has a larger annual mileage than his British counterpart, this mileage ratio is probably no more than 1.5 or 2 to 1. I wonder whether the suggested inverse relationship between "population density" and mileage "necessarily" travelled also applied to Australia, which has a population density about one-fifteenth that of the US?

It would be easy to criticize in detail the rest of the figures given; I suggest they are all too large by a factor of two. Instead of pretending that the average UK citizen is as well off as his US counterpart, it would surely be more useful (and profitable) to examine the reasons for the differences in living standards between the two countries.

Yours faithfully,

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## The Future of Biology

SIR.—The recent letter from Dr Jennings and Dr Bradshaw concerning the training of PhDs in biological subjects (*Nature*, 222, 1209; 1969) criticized the inflexible attitude of postgraduates without offering any solution to this problem. It seems inevitable that a training in original research must be gained in a very specialized field and, in view of the volume of scientific literature, postgraduates can hardly be expected to read widely outside their subject when there is no immediate incentive to do so. It is not surprising, therefore, that after three years' research students appear to have retreated into the security of their particular field and lack wider academic and vocational interests.

One solution to this problem might be the inclusion of taught courses for postgraduates as in American universities. However, such courses would probably still be specialized according to the interests of the staff members and they would not improve general biological awareness. In our opinion the introduction of seminars led by postgraduates in all universities would offer a more constructive solution. The postgraduate would then have an integral part to play in the educational system and could not become divorced from other facets of biological research. This would benefit all concerned; for the postgraduate it would improve his powers of communication and for the undergraduate it would offer more informal tuition and might provide advance warning of the psychological problems of research. Certainly such teaching responsibilities would be a more useful way for science postgraduates to supplement their income than the supervision of practical classes which is often their only contact with undergraduates at present. Of course, work of this kind would mean a sacrifice of research time, but it would provide another valuable criterion for assessing the employment potential of the postgraduate.

Yours faithfully,

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M. R. TURNER

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## University News

The following members of the faculty of medicine at **Harvard University** have been promoted to full professorships: **Dr C. S. Davidson**, professor of medicine; **Dr A. Ames**, professor of physiology in the department of surgery; **Dr H. Amos**, professor of bacteriology and immunology; **Dr J. R. Beckwith**, professor of bacteriology and immunology; **Dr A. Stone Freedberg**, professor of medicine; **Dr E. J. Furshpan**, professor of neurobiology; **Dr J. Gross**, professor of medicine; **Dr Elizabeth D. Hay**, Louise Foote Pfeiffer professor of embryology; **Dr J. Hedley-Whyte**, professor of anaesthesia; **Dr E. Henneman**, professor of physiology; **Dr S. H. Ingbar**, professor of medicine; **Dr Susumu Ito**, professor of anatomy; **Dr R. W. Jeanloz**, professor of biological chemistry; **Dr W. E. Knox**, professor of biological chemistry; **Dr E. A. Kravitz**, professor of neurobiology; **Dr E. C. Lin**, professor of bacteriology and immunology; **Dr D. D. Potter**, professor of neurobiology; **Dr J.-P. Revel**, professor of anatomy; and **Dr C. C. Richardson**, professor of biological chemistry.

**Dr R. L. Sidman** has been appointed Bullard professor of neuropathology in the faculty of medicine at **Harvard University**.

**Dr T. W. Lambe** has been appointed Edmund K. Turner professor of civil engineering at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**.