Who in America and Who's Who of American Women. It has some surreal misprints—"enzyme" frequently becomes "engine"—but they are unlikely to confuse anybody. The book was assembled by an army of graduate students at Chicago University, which may explain how Marx and Reich got in. Chicago graduate students must be one of the very few groups of people in the world who look with favour at both of that pair of irreconcilables.

NICHOLAS EVANS

Correspondence

Ecdysone and DNA Puffs

SIR,—In the December 14 issue of *Nature* (220, 1078; 1968) your cell biology correspondent referred to a paper by Crouse (*Proc. US Nat. Acad. Sci.*, 61, 971; 1968) in which some experiments of ours were repeated concerning the prevention of puff formation in *Sciara coprophila* by cortisone. In our investigations of *Sciara coprophila* (Goodman, Goidl and Richart, *ibid.*, 58, 553; 1967) using cortisone (a chemical analogue of ecdysone), we found that puff formation did not occur in cortisone fed larvae. Despite the fact that no puffs appeared, cortisone fed larvae pupated at the same time as their normally fed counterparts, and developed, on schedule, into fertile adult flies. The removal of cortisone at any time during larval development permitted the resumption of normal puff formation. Contrary to what we reported, Crouse found no suppression of puff formation by cortisone but rather a prolongation of larval development.

Daily measurements of salivary gland DNA throughout the fourth instar correlate well with our cytological observations. Using the diphenylamine reaction we found that both normal and cortisone fed larvae show a gradual increase in DNA during the fourth instar. When puffing occurs in normally fed larvae there is a marked concomitant increase in DNA content. In cortisone fed larvae, however, there is neither puff formation nor an increase in DNA content. On the other days of the fourth instar, before and after puffing occurs, there is a two to three-fold increase in DNA in normal larvae and only slightly less in cortisone fed larvae. We therefore concluded that neither puff formation nor the increase in DNA associated with puff formation is essential for normal development.

Your correspondent suggested, as had Crouse, that the difference between our observations and Crouse's was due simply to developmental prolongation by cortisone acetate. This suggestion is not consistent with our findings. We find no developmental delay induced by cortisone; we regularly examine our cortisone fed stock (which is routinely maintained in the laboratory) and have repeatedly confirmed our original observations that puffs in cortisone fed larvae do not occur and that pupation is on schedule.

That puff formation is not essential for normal development does not in the least detract from the value of the giant Dipteran chromosomes as unique material for investigating hormonal control of nucleic acid synthesis.

Yours faithfully,

REBA MIRSKY GOODMAN

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College of Physicians and
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Demise of a Department

SIR,—As a graduate trained in science now reading both history and philosophy as an external advanced student of London University in the Faculty of Arts, I was disturbed to learn of the predicament of the History and Philosophy of Science Department at University College, London (*Nature*, 221, 995; 1969). The case for retrenchment appears to rest solely on the high staff to student ratio and the feasibility of farming out these subjects to other departments. I believe the number of students in this department could be raised significantly almost overnight if the regulations in both the arts and science faculties were made consonant with the modern world. One of the most disturbing features of our educational system is the seeming inflexibility of the syllabuses in many departments and in the combination of subjects permitted. Why, for example, cannot history of science be offered at the history examination? And why cannot history and philosophy of science be examined at general level in both the arts and science faculties? Perhaps the threat of demise will now invoke answers to questions such as these.

The statistics for post- and undergraduate applications confirm the growing preference for the social sciences at the expense of more traditional disciplines, and the awareness of their problems. If we are to confound the "two culture" mentality, it is essential not only to provide a meeting ground for the arts and sciences but also to find enough students and teachers actually to meet.

To close the department would be an admission of failure to meet this challenge. I can think of no department in the university better placed to foster these qualities.

Yours faithfully,

ALFRED CREED

20 Hawkes End,
Brampton,
Huntingdon.

Museum on the Move*

SIR,—We are tempted to question whether the proposed removal of the bird collections of the British Museum (Natural History) from South Kensington to Tring has been given due and proper consideration.

There are several good reasons why this plan should not be implemented. First, it would seem to us that insufficient consideration has been given to the inconvenience it will occasion to the staff, who, if the plan is carried out, will be in complete scientific isolation from all the other branches of zoology previously conveniently housed under one roof. This availability is surely a great stimulus to research and consultation.

In the second place, we doubt whether the proposed new arrangement would prove convenient and acceptable to foreign scientists visiting this country to work in the Bird Room. London is London (especially to them), and at the end of each day's research they have been able to enjoy the social amenities offered by London without having to toil backwards and forwards to Tring. Furthermore, of course, the choice of hotels is far greater in London than it could ever be in Tring. Such decentralization is retrogressive and is not likely to be viewed favourably by any of these overseas visitors.

In so far as amateur workers are concerned, we are obliged to further our researches in our spare time and the loss of effective working time in travelling to and from Tring must be obvious.

Surely the sensible thing to do is to build the new ornithological department on ground already available at the Natural History Museum in South Kensington, and

* These letters refer to an article in *Nature*, 221, 1094 (1969).