

are available. However, I am glad to note that others have taken a very different view.

Yours faithfully,

B. C. L. WEEDON

Food Additives and Contaminants
Committee.

To say that the industrial members of the committee give advice as independent experts, which nobody disputes, does not by itself deny that their value to the committee stems from their knowledge of what happens in industry. Editor, *Nature*.

SIR,—Your leading article “The Cyclamate Bandwagon” (*Nature*, 224, 298; 1969) has left a number of American commentators, including myself, in some confusion as to your position on whether cyclamate should or should not be banned. I believe that your editorial was addressed mainly to the crisis atmosphere in which issues of this kind seem inevitably to be judged. At one point, however, you remark that “the chief harm in this is that it gives the impression that cyclamates had been regarded as entirely safe until now”; at another point you appear to deplore the ban in somewhat less direct language which I may have misinterpreted.

I share your hope that future cases of this nature might be decided more rationally. One step to that aim might be a clear statement as to the proper policy that should be adopted now. An even more important step, perhaps, would be to delineate the kinds of testing that should govern the approval of a proposed food additive. The fact that saccharine has been in use for fifteen years has very little relevance to the possibility of chronic hazards from it—witness the decades that were needed to appreciate the actual health hazards of cigarette smoking. As far as I know, there have been no systematic epidemiological studies that could sort out the possible benefits or conceivable hazards of saccharine.

The potential threat of chemical induction of cancer surely should not be taken lightly: in part because of the dread implications of this particular disease, in part because of the grave difficulties that we have in assessing the carcinogenic potentials of chronic use of any material. In attempts to validate the safety of a food additive expected to be consumed over life-long periods by hundreds of millions of consumers, we must face some perplexities in attempting to use experimental laboratory data; and no one has yet submitted a more rational approach than to feed the agent at very high levels in hopes of revealing its potential toxicity within the limitations of time and of a limited range of experimental subjects that are inherent in an animal experiment. This procedure has many imperfections, but the most serious fallacy may be to rely upon a negative result from this kind of animal testing in the face of suspicions based on theoretical insight or on other indirect evidence that a compound may still have an important biological effect.

Yours faithfully,

JOSHUA LEDEBERG

Department of Genetics,
Stanford University School of Medicine,
Stanford, California 94305, USA.

University News

Professor E. Markland, Queen's University, Belfast, has been appointed to the chair of mechanical engineering, **University College, Cardiff, University of Wales**.

Appointments

The Minister of Technology has appointed **Mr W. J. Charnley**, Deputy Controller of Guided Weapons and **Mr H. G. R. Robinson**, Head of Research Planning Division.

Mr D. E. Morris has been appointed to the post of **Scientific Adviser** (Civil Aviation) in the Board of Trade, in succession to **Mr S. F. Follett**.

The executive council of the **Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux** has appointed **Mr W. G. Alexander**, representing the United Kingdom, as chairman in succession to **Mr M. K. A. Agyeman**, representing Ghana, from January 1, 1970. **Mr F. C. Makoza**, representing Malawi, has been appointed vice-chairman.

Dr R. F. Legget has retired as director of the Division of Building Research of the **National Research Council of Canada**. He is succeeded by **Dr N. B. Hutcheon**.

Announcements

The following officers and council members of the **International Union for Pure and Applied Biophysics** will serve for the period 1969–72: **Dr J. C. Kendrew** (president); **Professor F. Lynen** (vice-president); **Professor A. Katchalsky** (honorary vice-president); **Professor A. K. Solomon** (secretary general); **Professor F. Buchthal**, **Professor A. Ehrenberg**, **Professor F. Hutchinson**, **Professor L. Kayushin**, **Dr E. Kellenberger**, **Dr R. D. Keynes**, **Professor I. Málek**, **Professor F. Oosawa**, **Professor B. Pullman** and **Dr G. N. Ramachandran**.

The **Pan-American Association of Biochemical Societies** (PAABS) has been created in order to promote cooperation between biochemical societies in America. Its role and activities will be similar to those of FEBS and its statutes express the intention to work closely with organizations such as FEBS and the International Union of Biochemistry. PAABS will come into being on January 1, 1970. Further details can be obtained from **Dr W. J. Whelan**, Department of Biochemistry, University of Miami School of Medicine, PO Box 875, Biscayne Annex, Miami, Florida 33152, USA.

The **Australian Academy of Science** has established the **Selby Fellowship**, which will be awarded every second year for research in any branch of physical or biological science at a university or research institution in Australia. Applicants should be graduates with preliminary research experience at some university outside Australia and under thirty years of age on July 1 of the year in which application is made. Further details are available from: Executive Secretary, Australian Academy of Science, Gordon Street, Canberra City, ACT 2601, Australia.

Sabbatical Itinerants

In the hope of providing some practical assistance in the good cause of mobility between laboratories, *Nature* advertises the needs for housing of families about to take up periods of sabbatical leave. To begin with, no charge will be made for advertisements like this. It is hoped that a period of experiment will show what form these advertisements could most usefully take and whether they are effective.

Wanted: 4 bedrooomed, centrally heated, furnished house in St John's Wood, Hampstead or Kensington for American professor for 1 year from September 1970. Please contact: **Dr Neil McIntyre**, Medical Unit, Royal Free Hospital, Lawn Road, London NW3. Telephone: 794 4561, ext. 8.

Wanted: Furnished house, 3 bedrooms, in or near Aberdeen, Scotland, for 6 months from March to August 1970 for visiting American professor, wife and 2 children. Please contact: **Dr John R. Tester**, Max Planck Institut für Verhaltensphysiologie, 8131 Erling-Andechs, Germany.