CORRESPONDENCE

Academic Freedom

SIR,—The Tenth Conference on Slavic Studies with the theme "Croatian Nation and Croatian Exodus—investigation of effects after 100 years of emigration" was held at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, November 26–28, 1971. The participants and sponsors issued at the conclusion of the conference the following statement:

We deeply regret the last minute changes in circumstances and decisions that prevented the attendance of the scheduled conference speakers from Yugoslavia: Professor Dr Ljudevit Jonke, Croatian University, Zagreb, and President, Matica Hrvatska; Pro-

fessor Dr Ivo Baucic, Croatian University, Zagreb; Professor Andjelko Runjic, Croatian University, Zagreb, and Professor Ivan Cizmic, Historical Institute, Matica Iseljnika Hrvatske, Zagreb.

Such occurrences are contrary to generally accepted practice of cultural exchanges intended to further understanding, cooperation and peace in the world.

We believe that academic freedom and international exchange of scholarship should not be infringed upon under any circumstances.

We are, however, confident that exchanges between American scholars in general, and those of Croatian descent in particular, and their colleagues in

Croatia will be frequent and fruitful in the future.

TEFKO SARACEVIC
President, American Croatian Academic Club,

General Chairman of the Conference
VLADIMIR RUS

Chairman, Department of Slavic and East European Languages,
Case Western Reserve University

MICHAEL S. PAP
Director, Institute for Soviet and East European Studies,
John Carroll University

DUSKO I. DUISIN

President,
Croatian Academy of America

VICTOR KOLUDROVICH
President,
Croatian Foundation of America

Obituary

Professor G. W. Harris

THE death of Geoffrey W. Harris, Dr Lee's Professor of Anatomy in the University of Oxford, on November 29, 1971, deprives British endocrinology of a scientist of world stature who did much to clarify the relationships between the brain and endocrine system and so lay the foundations of the sub-discipline of neuroendocrinology. The work which made his name was the discovery of the functional significance of the hypophyseal portal vessels linking the brain and pituitary gland. He was also deeply involved in the isolation of the chemical agents that control the output of anterior pituitary hormones, the releasing factors.

While a student at Cambridge in 1935 Harris became greatly interested in the work of F. H. A. Marshall, who had drawn attention to the observations establishing that environmental stimuli influence reproductive function in numerous species, and was led to investigate the physiological basis of these effects. Marshall had shown with E. B. Verney that diffuse electrical stimulation of the brain of anaesthetized female rabbits frequently caused ovulation and suggested to Harris that the effects of localized electrical stimulation of the hypothalamus merited study. In due course the demonstration that

excitation of the hypothalamus elicited gonadotrophin secretion launched Harris on his life's work.

Since it was then believed that many neuroendocrine responses were slow to become manifest, and that prolonged stimulation of the brain was required to elicit them, Harris devoted much time and ingenuity to developing a method for the inductive stimulation of the brain in freely moving and conscious animals. This was long before the development of radio-controlled devices. Because the generation of massive electromagnetic fields was necessary, the equipment was spectacular in operation, although the rabbits housed in it remained undisturbed. At first, attention was directed toward the activities of the neurohypophysis, the control of milk ejection and uterine motility, but later the control of adrenal and thyroid gland function came under scrutiny.

In parallel with this work the nature of the functional link between the brain and pituitary gland was being determined. Although it was expected that nerve fibres would transmit stimuli from the nervous system to this endocrine organ, the necessary nerve fibres in the anterior pituitary proved extremely difficult to demonstrate convincingly and the possibility that the hypophyseal portal vessels could provide an alternative pathway remained speculative, al-

though J. D. Green and Harris had been able to demonstrate that blood flowed from the median eminence to the pituitary gland.

Previous workers had examined the effect of section of the pituitary stalk on the secretion of pituitary hormones with contradictory findings, but Harris in 1950 established that rapid regeneration of the portal vessels occurred after transection and that the level of pituitary function could be related to the degree of vascular reconnection. Prevention of regeneration of the system by the insertion of a waxed paper plate was associated with a consistent depression of pituitary function.

The special character of the blood derived from the median eminence of the hypothalamus was next established in work with Dora Jacobsohn by removing the pituitary gland of rats and then placing pituitary tissue either in contact with the median eminence or under the temporal lobe of the brain. Only those animals with grafts made to the median eminence showed a return of pituitary function, although in both locations the transplant was nourished by blood vessels derived from the brain. This work also indicated that the cyclic pattern of gonadotrophin secretion seen in the female, as opposed to the constant release in the male, is due to differences in hypothalamic activity.