COMMENTS
by Readers

In a recent communication to this column (*Science*, August 5, p. 127) Drs. Dicker and Heller critically reviewed a recent paper of the writer dealing with the creatinine, inulin, and hippurate clearance of the rat (*Amer. J. Physiol.*, 1947, **148**, 387). It was their belief that (1) the preliminary and very brief (less than 5 minutes) ether anesthesia given to the rats preceding our clearance studies, (2) handling of rats during the clearance, (3) withdrawal of 1.0–1.75 cc. of blood from the rats before the clearance, and (4) the possible variation of the blood creatinine during a possible two-hour collection period, all tended to give us results which might not be comparable to those obtained by Drs. Dicker and Heller, who employed collection methods which they believed to be more physiological.

If factors (1), (2), and (3) above were operating in our clearance studies, they acted as the authors themselves have stated (*J. Physiol.*, 1945, **103**, 449), namely, to depress renal clearances. This, then, makes it difficult to understand why our average inulin clearance (19.1 cc.) at our lowest rate of urine flow was approximately the same as the average inulin clearance (21.06 cc.) of all of their clearances and why our average inulin clearance (41.1 cc.) at a high rate of urine flow was 90 per cent higher than theirs. The same discrepancy holds for their and our rates of renal plasma flow. In other words, if our technique supposedly depressed clearances, thus making them different than theirs, why are our clearances so much higher?

Concerning the fourth factor (the creatinine variation), we found, in preliminary determinations taken every 15 minutes during the collection period, that the blood creatinine remained relatively unchanged. Drs. Dicker and Heller assume that we conducted a two-hour collection because of small urine collections. We stated in our paper that the two-hour collection was designed to avoid the necessity of making clearance calculations on total collection volumes which might not exceed 0.07 cc. of urine, as occurred in some of Dicker and Heller's experiments. We further stated, and still believe, that their clearances were erroneously low because of possible urine losses attending such small collections.

Drs. Dicker and Heller are referred to the clearance results of the rat as given by Drs. Braun-Menendez and Chiodi (*Rev. Soc. Arg. Biol.*, 1946, **23**, 314). In this independent study of inulin and diodrast clearances of the rat, clearances were obtained by a technique differing from ours. Nevertheless, Dr. Braun-Menendez has informed me (as a review of his article will also demonstrate) that his clearances were almost identical with ours. Furthermore, both he and Dr. Chiodi were convinced that their clearance values varied with the urine flow. (MEYER FRIEDMAN, *Mount Zion Hospital, San Francisco, California.*)

In the years to come American scientists will presumably wish to participate actively in international conferences, some of which may be called on fairly short notice. The story that follows may serve to illustrate the kinds of obstacles that one may encounter because of passport difficulties. We must find ways of eliminating obstacles of this sort.

Early in August I received an official confirmation of a provisional invitation for me to attend a three-day conference called for September 11–13 by the Committee on Science and Its Social Relations (CSSR). This confirmation was in the form of a telegram from Dr. F. J. M. Stratton, chairman of the CSSR and also secretary of the International Council of Scientific Unions (of which the CSSR is a committee).

Certain preliminaries had to be taken care of, and, on August 18, I presented in person at the office of the Passport Division of the State Department in Washington, D. C., a fully-documented passport application. A passport that had originally been issued to me in 1938, and which was recalled as a matter of routine in 1941, was on file in Washington. The clerk who received my application assured me that my passport would be issued within a week. I informed him that I was making air reservations to leave September 6 or 7.

Accompanying the passport application was an official personal letter of endorsement from Dr. Detlev W. Bronk, chairman of the National Research Council, in which he requested the issuance of a special passport. In this letter Dr. Bronk pointed out that as a part of this trip to Europe I would also stop in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters, a visit that was highly desirable for me as chairman of the NRC Committee on UNESCO.

I was preparing to leave on September 7, but when, after two weeks, no passport came, I went (again in person) to the Passport Division and inquired about the reasons for the delay. The reception given to me was kind and courteous, but I was informed by the assistant chief of the Passport Division that he could not issue a passport as long as "official clearance" had not been obtained. He promised to send me the passport himself, the moment the needed clearance would come through.

The NRC then renewed its efforts to obtain a passport in time for me to proceed to the London meeting. I informed Dr. Harlow Shapley of the unexpected delays, and he sent a telegram to the Secretary of State, urging that a passport be issued to me right away. Dr. Shapley sent this telegram in his capacity of president of the AAAS.

A personal inquiry by me to the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that the issuing of the required clearance was wholly in the hands of the State Department.

On September 9 I talked by telephone with the assistant chief of the Passport Division, who held out hopes that a passport might come through later that day or early the next day. He offered to do everything possible to speed me on my way if the needed clearance were to come through on September 9 or 10. The "security investigation" was, however, not completed in time, and no passport was issued. On September 10 I had to telegraph to London that I would be unable to attend the London meeting.

I understand that another scientist