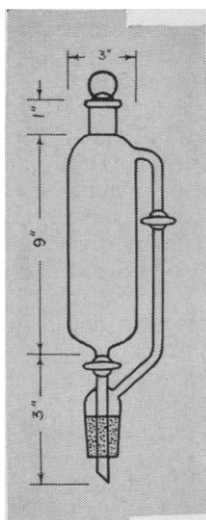
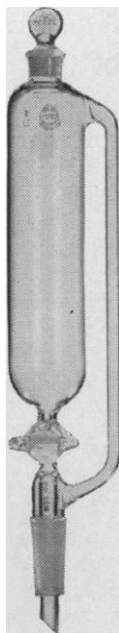


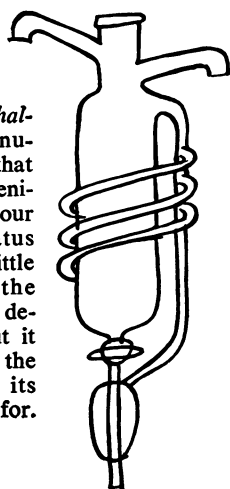
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Letters

Population of Australia

In the issue of 3 January, Paul B. Sears [*Science* 127, 9 (1958)] cites the population density of the continents (page 11). His observations on "The inexorable problem of space" are so thoughtful and so timely that I venture to call attention to his estimate for Australia, which may confuse some readers.

The estimate given for Australia is 31 inhabitants per square mile. If this refers to Australia (and Tasmania) alone, the figure should be approximately 3.1 per square mile. It is probable, therefore, that Sears is referring to the entire south-east Asian archipelago, and that Indonesia, New Zealand, and possibly the Philippine Republic and Taiwan are to be included—the over-all average for these areas collectively would be in the neighborhood of 31 per square mile. But the figure given for Asia (78 per square mile) suggests that the offshore islands are included in the Asian estimate.

GEOFFREY BRUUN

Ithaca, New York

I am most grateful to Geoffrey Bruun and also to Chester Longwell for calling attention to this error.

The figures were obtained from a standard atlas. It is not available as I write, so that I am unable to say whether the datum given for Australia was intended for the whole of Australasia, a misprint, or my own error in copying, although I checked the table twice. I did, however, take the precaution to have my manuscript read by three very competent critics, none of whom caught the error.

The paragraph in question (page 11, column 3) should therefore be amended to read as follows:

"North America, including great areas of desert and tundra, follows with 23, while Africa and South America are nearly tied, with 17 and 19, respectively. The figure for the United States is 51, while Australia is the least densely populated of the continents, with about 3 persons per square mile."

I am obliged to M. B. Russell and Donald Jones for comments on the statement regarding corn production (page 13, column 2). Actually, both per acre and total production within the corn belt proper are greater than ever. It is the natural fertility—that is, that possible without fertilizer input—that has declined. The present high total yield can be even further increased, as I have said, but this fact must be weighed against increasing production costs and the present high rate of population increase.

Incidentally, Jones has reminded me

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OF THIS ISSUE**

that geneticists who have written about future prospects are perhaps less sanguine than are soil specialists.

Cecil T. Blunn, of the University of Nebraska faculty in Turkey, at Ankara, has also called my attention to another detail (page 13, column 3, paragraph 1). He informs me that the individual Turk is anything but phlegmatic. Obviously I should have used the word *courageously* instead of *phlegmatically*. What I had in mind, of course, is the fact that neither the Finnish nor the Turkish Government has allowed itself to be stampeded. It is obvious from Blunn's letter that he admires the Turkish people very much, which is good news.

PAUL B. SEARS

Yale University,
New Haven, Connecticut

International Clearinghouse

Your editorial "Strength through union," in the 14 February issue of *Science* [127, 313 (1958)], discusses an issue of great importance to scientists. There is no doubt that we need a clearinghouse and coordination center for abstracting, indexing, retrieving, and translating the vast flood of scientific publications which is inundating us today and which will increase with time. There is much to be said for your conclusion that this service can best be performed by combining and coordinating private and governmental facilities and programs, and I was happy to learn that progress is being made in this direction.

It seems, however, that this is a problem of international scope; one that could and should be solved by an international clearinghouse. Such a world science literature center, organized, perhaps, under the United Nations, could abstract all the literature now being covered by Russian, American, and other abstracting agencies, and the abstracts, appropriately translated, could be made to meet the requirements of scientists throughout the world. To Americans and Russians this would represent a great saving in expense and technical manpower; to the scientists of many small countries it would mean the difference between participation and scientific isolation.

Scientists have often emphasized the international nature of their interests and activities. Unwittingly they may be drawn into the disruptive eddies of political currents and swept apart. Here, it seems, is an opportunity to forge a link across international lines which has great potential value to science and which could serve as a significant strand in the forging of broader bonds of understanding between nations.

JOHN T. EMLÉN, JR.
Department of Zoology,
University of Wisconsin, Madison

11 APRIL 1958

Meetings

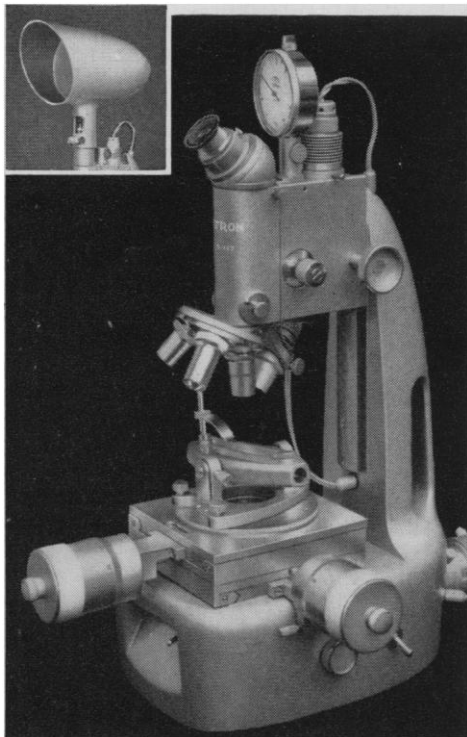
Ninth Pacific Science Congress

The small, forward-looking group of scientists, headed by the late Herbert E. Gregory, who organized the First Pacific Science Congress, held in Honolulu in 1920 (and known then as the Pan-Pacific Science Congress), could hardly have guessed the magnitude of the success that would in future years crown this pioneer effort.

It is an understatement to say that the

Ninth Pacific Science Congress, held in Bangkok, 18 Nov. to 9 Dec. 1957, exceeded all expectations. The attendance of 860 registered delegates—the largest attendance at any Pacific Science Congress to date—included 500 foreign delegates and 360 delegates from Thailand. In all, 36 countries or territorial subdivisions (such as Hong Kong, Singapore, New Guinea, and the Ryukyus) were represented. Of the registered delegates, 228 were from the United States.

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