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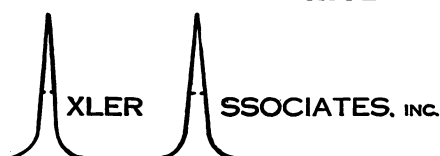
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Letters

On the Pay of Biologists

The announcement "Pay Up for Some Government Scientists" in a recent issue of *Science* [127, 21 (3 Jan. 1958)] states that biologists are not included in the pay increase. This seems to be an old and perennial problem among the biologists. I am reminded of the following note I came across this past summer while reading through some old correspondence of the naturalists (Hyatt, Packard, Putnam, and Morse) who founded the Peabody Museum of Salem, the *American Naturalist*, and the American Society of Naturalists.

Rochester, New York
May 18, 1870

I am well aware that works of scientific character are not remunerative, and regret that you have not received the money [subscription money sent to the *American Naturalist*, not properly credited]. Scientific men get much less for their services than any other class of workers. Audubon's great work on birds was a failure in a pecuniary point of view. Le Balian, the great African traveler, died absolutely poor. I am informed our great American botanist Asa Gray gets the meager sum of fifteen hundred dollars a year for his valuable services. And many others might be mentioned of like character.

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT BUNKER

The biologist continues to be low man on the scientific totem pole.

RALPH W. DEXTER
Department of Biology, Kent State
University, Kent, Ohio

Department of Science

In the editorial of the 31 January issue of *Science* [127, 213 (1958)], you question the effectiveness and usefulness of a Secretary of Science, and it seems to me that you prefer the idea of adding a science adviser to some Government departments. There may be a possibility of joining these two ideas: The Secretary of Science would appoint the science advisers for the different departments, so that no overlapping would occur. In this way the Secretary of Science would have a great responsibility and a very useful task.

But this is not all. There is no longer any value in having a combined Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Each activity in itself is too great a task for the three to be handled together by one department. The best thing would be to separate the "Education" and to put it under the Secretary of Science. There are so many things to decide, to order, to explore, and to alter that this Department of Science would be fully occupied. There would be one office which could make decisions for the nation and for all levels of schools as well

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as for all types of schools. The curriculum of a school should no longer be determined by a local school-board or by school boards in certain states; this is a national matter, and there must be nationwide direction. All these supervisory activities must be handled uniformly, in one central place.

ROBERT LOBSTEIN

Santa Monica, California

Actinomycetes

There has been, in recent years, a most unfortunate tendency to publish names of presumably new species of microorganisms, notably actinomycetes, without accompanying such names by proper descriptions. This tendency has been greatly aggravated by the growing interest in describing or in patenting new antibiotics, where a new name for an organism producing such an antibiotic might carry additional weight for priority for independent discovery, or for patentability. Enough problems are raised when names of organisms are published with insufficient descriptions; these difficulties are compounded when no descriptions are given at all. Often a new name is announced, accompanied by one of the following statements:

"This organism appears to be different from those reported in the literature."

"This organism proved to be a hitherto undescribed actinomycete and is named _____."

"Since the characteristics of this organism were not in accordance with those of any of the *Streptomyces* listed in *Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology*, it was given the name _____."

Sometimes no evidence is presented that a thorough search of the literature has been made, and frequently the new name is not even accompanied by a rudimentary description.

This practice of creating new species, not accompanied by valid descriptions, is to be thoroughly condemned. It violates both the botanical and bacterial codes of nomenclature. It is thoroughly unscientific.

I would like to recommend, therefore, that journals refrain from accepting papers for publication in which new species are listed without accompanying descriptions of the organisms or without references to prior publications of such descriptions.

Incidentally, while I am on the subject of scientific usage, attention should be called to the fact that many scientific journals have adopted the practice of avoiding the use of trade names for antibiotics in scientific papers but insist upon the proper use of scientific names in such papers. Thus, the name "chloramphenicol" is used in scientific litera-

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