teases and other enzymes which act on large molecular substrates that possess numerous linkages susceptible to cleavage. However, in some instances—for example, the phosphorylases—the assay of enzyme activity can be given in terms of micromoles of product. In other instances—for example, for proteases—synthetic substrates of low molecular weight are available and are being used by an increasing number of investigators.

The proposed unit has been found acceptable to a number of enzymologists who have been consulted. Several commercial firms concerned with the production and sale of enzymes both in the United States and in Europe concur in the proposal and are now using this unit in their description sheets.

The purpose of this statement is to stimulate a wider use of this enzyme unit where it is suitable, and to invite comments and suggestions regarding other problems in the evaluation of commercially available enzyme preparations. Please write to Efraim Racker, Chairman, Subcommittee on Enzymes of the Committee on Biological Chemistry, National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council, Washington, D.C.

Manual for Isotope Users

An expert panel has completed the first phase of its task of assisting the International Atomic Energy Agency in drawing up health and safety recommendations to govern the packaging, transport, use, and disposal of radioisotopes. At its first series of meetings, which ended 6 June in Vienna, the panel unanimously approved recommendations for a draft "Manual of Safe Practices." A final draft will be considered at another session of the specialists late in August, and the resulting text will be put before the second general conference of IAEA in the latter part of September.

At a later time, the group will take up the task of establishing international standards in this field for adoption by international and national authorities. The panel is made up of ten members, one from each of the ten countries. Gunnar Randers of Norway is chairman, and Forrest Western is the United States representative.

Science Equipment Library

Hofstra College has announced formation of a central library of scientific and engineering equipment for loan to neighboring colleges and high schools for educating future scientists. The equipment pool, believed to be the first of its kind, will make available expensive apparatus that relatively few institutions can afford.

A $25,000 grant from the Esso Education Foundation is financing the beginning of the new library. The grant to Hofstra is part of a special 3-year program under which the Esso Education Foundation will disburse $1.5 million in grants to improve science and engineering education throughout the United States. The program was initiated last summer when the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) awarded the special fund to the foundation in observance of the company's 75th anniversary.

Fertility Research Laboratory

A fertility research laboratory has been established at the Margaret Sanger Research Bureau, 17 West 16th St., New York, for the purpose of studying the physiology of reproduction and evaluating methods for the control of conception. Special studies on sperm migration, the time required for the sperm to enter the cervix, and other reproductive processes are already under way. More than 70 products that are being used for contraceptive purposes have already been studied and evaluated in the bureau's laboratories. The results will serve as a guide to planned parenthood centers as well as to the consumer on the effectiveness of the various chemical products now on the market.

The work is under the direction of Abraham Stone, director of the bureau, and John MacLeod of Cornell University. Aquiles J. Sobrero has been appointed assistant medical director in charge of research.

News Briefs

India is preparing the first map of Nepal at the request of the Nepalese Government. Indian aircraft are engaged in an aerial survey that already has covered several thousand square miles of Nepal's total area of 54,000 square miles. The project is to be completed by the end of this year.

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The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature has new headquarters. All friends and correspondents of the commission, and all members of the forthcoming Colloquium on Zoological Nomenclature, are asked to note that correspondence and inquiries should in future be addressed to Mr. R. V. Melville, Assistant Secretary, International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, 119 Parkway, Gloucester Gate, London, N.W. 1, England.

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture has assured officials of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas that it is intensifying cooperative work with these states to halt an outbreak of grasshoppers, now developing as the most serious insect threat of recent years. Under existing state-USDA agreements, the Federal Government will bear one-third of the cost of insecticide treatments needed on rangelands, roadsides, and idle land to prevent further invasion of cropland by the grasshoppers.

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A report that appeared recently in the Chinese Communists' official organ *Jenmin Jihpao* (*People's Daily*), says that most of the provinces in the People's Republic of China are making preparations to set up more research institutes and branches of the Chinese Academy of Sciences as centers for local scientific work. Shensi and Chekiang are provinces where such centers have been established in the last 2 months. Four other branches have been established in the cities of Lanchow, Wuhan, Canton, and Sinkiang, and offices have been opened in Shanghai, Nanking, and Kunming.

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Fifty-five percent of the $480 million paid out by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company last year in death claims was for diseases of the heart and arteries, and about 20 percent for cancer. Together these causes of death accounted for somewhat more than $3 of each $4 paid in claims to beneficiaries. Twenty years ago they accounted for only 52.7 percent of the total.

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A new reactor at the Atomic Energy Commission's Oak Ridge National Laboratory was successfully operated on 29 May at its design power level of 20,000 kilowatts of heat. The reactor, designated the Oak Ridge Research Reactor, has the highest power level of the six reactors in operation at the laboratory. The reactor represents a major engineering advance over previous research reactors of the materials-testing reactor type, since it achieved extremely high neutron fluxes at only a fraction of the cost of previous reactors of this class. The ORR is a prototype for similar reactors that are being built in various parts of the world.

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Tulane University has contracted with the International Cooperation Administration to extend its consultant services to the seven medical schools in Colombia for 3 more years. Under the program five Tulane consultants have each spent 3 months in Colombia discussing mutual problems with their Colombian colleagues. Opportunities have also been extended to Colombian medical doctors interested in academic medicine to come to the United States on fellowships for advanced study, particularly in the basic sciences.