Letters

Nuclear Tests

I cannot conceal my disappointment, even shame, on reading the pious platitudes of our Council's Resolution on Control of Nuclear Weapons Tests, printed in the issue of 16 January [*Science* **129**, 137 (1959)]. One might rather have expected such a resolution from an association of scientific civil servants, too terrified of losing their jobs to risk offending Dulles and the Atomic Energy Commission. An embarrassed silence would have been preferable to this type of sickening hypocrisy.

Instead of emitting "profound hope that the Geneva Conference negotiations will prove successful," the Council might well have told the world in a clear, straightforward way (i) whether they consider that nuclear bomb test explosions constitute a probable danger to the future of our species; (ii) whether they favor discontinuance of such explosions (that is, *yes* or *no*); (iii) whether they are alarmed at the present situation in which two armed, cynical, irresponsible, and dishonest giants are daily threatening each other and the rest of the world with total destruction; and (iv) how the international scientific community can bring pressure to bear on Tweedledum and Tweedledee to restore calmness and sanity where it is most needed.

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Beneficiation of Soils Contaminated by Strontium-90

I have read with surprise and concern W. F. Libby's report [*Science* **128**, 1134 (1958)] on his experiments which were made, as he says, to test two proposals: (i) that the addition of sulfates to contaminated soils might be helpful in making strontium unavailable for plant nutrition, and (ii) that potassium might have a considerable beneficial effect with respect to absorption of radiostrontium.

I will attempt to justify my surprise on purely technical grounds, for what Libby refers to in his report are not experiments but, at best, "high spot tests," which could not, on any grounds, allow one to arrive at valid conclusions.

The soil is such a complex system that it must be fully characterized before one can undertake to do anything with it. To say that the soil used was taken from a garden in Washington, D.C., and that it had an exchange capacity of 32 milliequivalents per 100 g is utterly useless, if this information was intended to help the scientific reader interpret the sig-