

ested in the quantitative approach to various problems of animal and plant physiology. As far as I know, he associated the rise of sap in tall trees with the pulling force generated by evaporation from the leaves. Does not Hales's principle underlie Dixon and Joly's as well as Askenasy's theory?

Almost a quarter of a millennium has passed since Hales attacked the problem which, as Scholander says, still challenges "the experimental ingenuity of future workers." It is worth while to remember that, according to Hales, our thoughts should carry us "a little farther than the plain evidence of experiments will warrant . . . otherwise we should make but very slow advances in future discoveries." Is it experimental ingenuity or ingenuity in conceptualization which now is needed most?

SIGISMUND PELLER

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Objectivity and Responsibility

I enjoyed and appreciated the editorial "The other fellows' ball park" [*Science* 134, 1163 (20 Oct. 1961)]. This touches one facet of a broader problem. I observe regretfully that certain elements of the scientific community are so absorbed in presenting the unprejudiced, objective viewpoint that they often do great damage to the democratic cause, usually by careless implication and omission. This is usually attributable to their being far better informed about the weaknesses of our own system than they are about the weaknesses of the competitive system.

Of late, *Science* has been particularly negligent about accepting responsibility for presenting a complete picture. For instance, in "Soviet defections: Conclusions of broad discontent unwarranted" ("Science and the news," 20 Oct.), the last paragraph is expressed exactly as I would expect it to be stated in a Russian newspaper, and no doubt Russian newspapers will quote this material verbatim.

Science and scientists cannot divest themselves of their national responsibility to consider the net effect of their expressions, particularly at this time when our own citizens and people the world over are keenly aware of the role of science in the present and future.

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Meetings

Microbiology in Latin America

The second Latin-American and the first Costa Rican national congresses of microbiology were jointly held from 10 to 17 December 1961, in San José, Costa Rica. The meeting was attended by about 300 participants from 16 nations, including 50 from England, Canada, and the United States.

Listed in the scientific program were

more than 150 titles, encompassing the following fields: general, medical, and veterinary bacteriology; immunology; helminthology; mycology; protozoology; virology; phytopathology; and agricultural and industrial microbiology. The greatest interest was expressed in medical microbiology. Abstracts of papers were published in a "General program and résumé"; many of the individual papers will appear in scientific journals.

Special symposia or panel sessions focused on leishmaniasis, intestinal parasitosis, microbial physiology and

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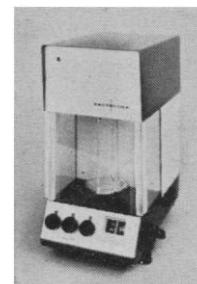
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biochemistry, and the teaching of microbiology and parasitology. In other sessions, new and important scientific films available for educational purposes were shown. Simultaneous Spanish-English translation made language no barrier to effective communication in the special sessions.

Registrants were afforded opportunity to inspect the entirely new and remarkably designed buildings comprising the University of Costa Rica. The status of microbiology in the host nation was indicated by its position as a

separate college and by an impressively functional and well-equipped building in University City. A day was devoted to a trip through beautiful mountainous countryside to the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Science.

Among the commercial and scientific exhibits at the congress, that of *Revista Latinamericana de Microbiologia*, an international journal of the Latin-American Association, elicited special interest. The journal provides lucid abstracts in translation of the articles, which are usually in Spanish. Important

for coverage of microbiology in a great geographical area *Revista* is available at \$6 (U.S.) per year through the editor, J. M. Gutiérrez Vásquez, Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Biológicas, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico, D.F.

A fine social program included daily luncheons, staging of traditional music and dance, an orchestral symphony, and a grand ball in the Latin-American manner, at which congress participants were honored by the presence of the President of the Republic, Señor Mario Echandi Jimenez.

The congress was ably managed by an organizing committee of the Costa Rica Association, of which the secretary-general was John L. de Abate, at the time of the meetings. Officers of the Latin-American Association were Geraldo Varela, president; Renato Soto Pacheco, vice president; Luis Palencia Franco, secretary; and Enriqueta Pizarro Suarez, treasurer. Their counterparts in the Costa Rica Association were, respectively, Renato Soto Pacheco, Roger Bolanos, Fernando Montero-Gei, and Guillermo Monge Amador.

Newly elected officers of the Latin-American Association are A. Pomales Lebron, president; Jose Oliver Gonzales, secretary; and Irving Fox, treasurer.

The American Society for Microbiology was officially represented by Philipp Gerhardt, secretary, and R. W. Sarber, executive-secretary, who were warmly received and included among the guests of honor. Their travel was sponsored by the National Science Foundation and Difco Laboratories, Inc.

The Latin-American congresses are convened at 3-year intervals. The first was held in Mexico City in 1958. The third is scheduled for 1964 in a place yet to be named. It holds promise of being as stimulating and rewarding as the congress just concluded.

PHILIPP GERHARDT

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Forthcoming Events

April

1-3. International College of Surgeons, Las Vegas, Nev. (Secretary, ICS, 1516 Lake Shore Dr., Chicago 10, Ill.)

1-4. American Radium Soc., annual, New York, N.Y. (C. G. Stetson, Dept. of Radiology, Englewood Hospital, Englewood, N.J.)

1-6. American Soc. of Abdominal Surgeons, clinical Congr., Chicago, Ill. (B. F.



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