

what Taube implies he charges is fundamental. It is only by ignoring such distinctions that Taube can ask his readers to believe that the whole field of artificial intelligence resembles nothing so much as a 19th-century hoax.

All in all, the first four paragraphs of his letter provide a fair sample of the ways in which Taube constructs arguments out of the appearances of evidence. They are worth some reflection when the reader of *Computers and Common Sense* encounters (p. 127) Taube's statement that "this book is soundly based on the maxim that 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'; and on an abiding faith that the process of rational inquiry and the increase and diffusion of knowledge are the noblest ends of man." As for the fifth paragraph, in view of the foregoing discussion, I find it difficult to be moved by Taube's lament at the corrosion of my virtue by the conditions of my employment. For, despite his concern with the scientific objectivity of everyone else in this area, it seems rather evident that somehow or other he has pretty much lost sight of his own.

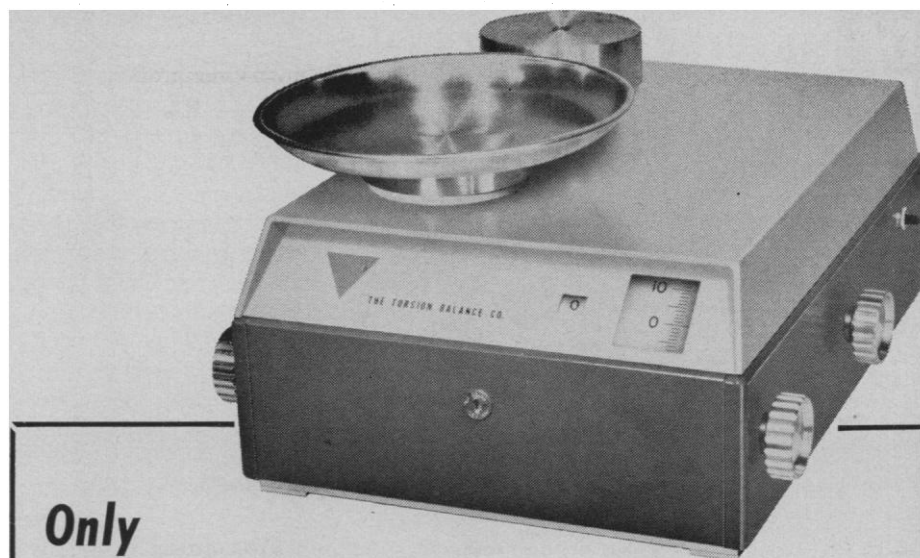
WALTER R. REITMAN
Carnegie Institute of Technology,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Financing of Medical Care for the Aged

I have just finished reading the news item entitled "Medical care: changes in the political terrain" [*Science* 135, 90 (12 Jan. 1962)].

At the bottom of column 2 is a sentence which states, "Last week, the Hospital Association's House of Delegates voted to approve the Social Security financing of care for the elderly, provided that the program would be administered through Blue Cross."

This statement is not accurate. In a statement of "Actions Taken—January 4, 1962—in Chicago, Illinois" by the American Hospital Association House of Delegates and by Blue Cross Association Member Plans, point 3 under the heading "American Hospital Association House of Delegates" reads as follows: "We recognize that government assistance is necessary to effectively implement this national Blue Cross proposal in order to enable many retired aged persons to purchase this health protection through the voluntary



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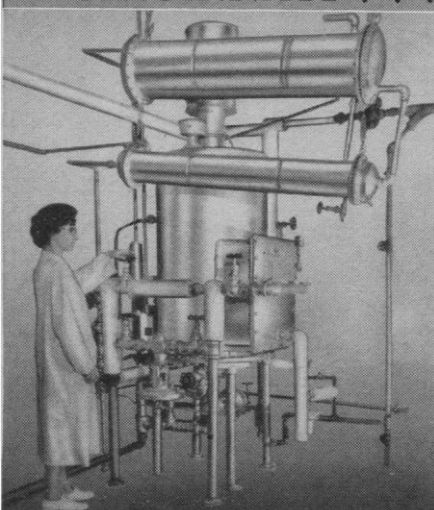


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prepayment system. Conditional upon the administration of this proposed plan by the voluntary nonprofit prepayment system, the tax source of the funds is of secondary importance to us."

Following point 3 there is an additional sentence of clarification which reads as follows: "(The last sentence of the above statement was interpreted to mean that the source of funds is of secondary importance to us provided the proposed plan is administered by the voluntary nonprofit prepayment system and not by the Social Security Administration.)"

JOHN R. KINSEY
*American Hospital Association,
Chicago, Illinois*

The ambiguities of the Hospital Association's statement have inevitably beclouded the significance of the AHA's shift in position. I think my description of the AHA position was accurate. The association in the past was opposed to the Social Security approach. At its last meeting it shifted its position to favor Blue Cross administration of a medical care program, with secondary importance attached to the source of the funds. This, in effect, is a shift away from the previous opposition to Social Security financing. Since Social Security financing is the principal type of federal financing for medical care now under consideration, it is pure evasion to say that this shift was not actually an endorsement of the Social Security approach.—D.S.G.

Keeping up with Soviet Research

On 22 February, when asked by a reporter whether the Soviets were giving us directly any results from their manned satellite flights, President Kennedy (after asking his press staff for the latest information) replied that, except for medical data, they weren't.

As subsequent events rapidly revealed, more accurate information to the President would have been: "They don't tell us privately—they just publish their findings; but we are too busy to read!"

On 26 February the following dispatch from Moscow appeared in the *New York Times*:

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Editor: Howard B. Sprague 1959

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