Letters

Controversial Caption

The caption describing Fig. 2 in Tien-Hsi Cheng's article on "Insect control in mainland China" [*Science* **140**, 269 (19 Apr. 1963)] reads: "Women students tugging mud (left) and transporting sand (right) for construction of a dam as part of their extracurricular requirements."

The figure on the left showing students tugging mud has been published recently in Edgar Snow's book *The Other Side of the River: Red China Today* (Random House, New York, 1962). Here the caption reads as follows: "Henri Cartier-Bresson photographed these 'impatient university students' who dragged tons of mud from a swamp 'to make their own swimming pool instead of waiting for machinery' at Tsing-Hua University, Peking. American picture magazines liked the photograph—but not Cartier-Bresson's caption."

In referring to this picture Cheng states: "Faculty members, students, public officials, and office workers live and work with peasants in order to increase agricultural production (Fig. 2)." I am not aware of the source of Cheng's figure but wish to suggest, in the interest of accuracy, that if it derives from a current American news magazine there may be doubt that the left hand picture (Fig. 2) does represent students indentured in agricultural labor, but rather shows a less serious activity of building a swimming pool in Peking, as the man who took the photograph suggests.

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. . . The picture on the right in Fig. 2 concerns construction of Ming Tombs Dam near Peking, one of the major irrigation projects completed under the present regime. It was taken in 1958. The one on the left, "Women students tugging mud . . ." has been differently interpreted by different authors:

1) Edgar Snow. "Henri Cartier-Bresson photographed these 'impatient university students' who dragged mud from a swamp 'to make their own swimming pool instead of waiting for machinery,' at Tsing Hua University, Peking. . . ."

2) "Red China Bid for a Future." Photographed for *Life* (19 Oct. 1959, pp. 44–61) by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Caption of the picture appears on page 46 as follows: "Bent and burdened, girl student at Peking University tugs away hopper of mud from pond that is being made into a swimming pool. Students are also required to do practical work in their fields for three months out of the year. This is one way regime combats tendency of intellectuals to look down on manual labor."

3) Exhibitions in Hong Kong. "Women students tugging mud for building dams as part of a swimming pool project. . . ."

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Federal Salaries in 1959

In taking $13,970 as the cutoff salary for the bottom of their Group 1 ("elite science-administrator") the authors of "The federal scientist-administrator" (*1*) may have been led astray by lack of familiarity with the federal salary structure in 1959, and the conclusions to be drawn from their Tables 3 and 4 as well as their second generalization on page 1269 probably need clarification.

Under the Classification Act of 1949 all federal clerical, administrative, and professional personnel in what is known as the "competitive service" of the executive branch have had their salaries set according to a general schedule of 15 regular grades (GS–1 to GS–15) and three supergrades (GS–16 to 18). Assignment to the regular grades is determined by the difficulties and responsibilities of the positions; the supergrades are strictly rationed by Congress. Thus on 30 June 1959 the distribution of positions in the top 3 regular grades and 3 supergrades was (*2*):

GS–18	158
GS–17	394
GS–16	926
GS–15	7,124
GS–14	15,825
GS–13	36,028

In addition to many of these personnel of the competitive service, the *Federal Register* lists most, if not all, of the policymaking individuals, whose salaries are fixed by statute, and the "excepted" individuals, whose salaries can be fixed by certain agencies themselves without regard for the Classification Act or the ceilings on supergrades (*3*).

Except for the GS–18 salary which was a flat $17,500, the other GS grades in 1959 had a basic entrance salary followed by "within-grade raises" for each 12 months of service in the lower grades, or 18 months at GS–11 or higher. For GS–15 the entrance salary was $12,770, increasing by $300 increments to $13,970; the GS–16 salary began at $14,190 and increased by $240 steps to $15,150.

Under the 83rd Congress, however, the Civil Service Commission was authorized to permit hiring at levels above the minimum salary for a grade when it was determined that a shortage of personnel existed in particular categories and, at the same time, the personnel already employed in this grade were raised to the same salary level. For some years the application of this permission was relatively minor, being limited to a few categories like card-punch operator, but shortly after the first sputnik flashed across the sky, a great number of new shortage categories appeared which were mainly concerned with physical science, and "top of the grade" salaries were authorized for them (*4*).

Thus a large number of GS–15 scientists, mainly in the physical field, suddenly appeared in the $13,970 salary category. If Uyeki and Cliffe had used $13,971 as the criterion for "administrative elite" the entire GS–15 population would have fallen into Group 2. Then the authors' generalization would probably not be valid, except as a de-