# 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*):

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|---|---|
| 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-

scription of the 1959 situation within grade. It is probably less valid in 1963, since, in the wake of two subsequent federal pay increases, the Civil Service Commission has abandoned above-the-minimum pay as a recruiting incentive —except for a few specialties in grade levels which are attractive to recent degree recipients.

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**References and Notes**

1. E. S. Uyeki and F. B. Cliffe, Jr., *Science*, **139**, 1267 (1963).
2. *Federal Employees' 1961 Almanac*, Federal Employees' News Digest, p. 153.
3. Although the law requires that the Civil Service Commission publish a "full and complete list of all persons occupying administrative and supervisory positions in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the Government," some agencies seem to interpret this requirement as not applying in detail to "field activities." For example on pages 214–215 of the 1959 *Federal Register* only names of commanding officers are indicated for 19 Navy "Special Field Activities," including several Navy laboratories, and many important Navy activities employing civilian scientists in supervisory or administrative positions are omitted altogether.
4. Two of the shortage categories that I recall were physicist, upper air, and oceanographer, physical. It was amazing how rapidly meteorologists and geological oceanographers switched into these fields.

## Rhinogradomemorabilia

I was delighted to see [*Science* **140**, 625 (10 May 1963)] G. G. Simpson's very scholarly review of *Anatomie et Biologie des Rhinogrades* by Harald Stümpke.

For years I have been keenly interested in the species Nasobema. Morgenstern preferred the spelling Nasobēm, the dash over the letter e signifying that the word rhymes with game.

As the learned reviewer regretfully points out, his grant did not allow him to consult the original manuscripts in which principal observations of the creature are recorded. Having to rely on translated translations, I fear that he failed to note a semantic error which has crept into the proceedings and which may well abort the infant discipline of rhinogradology.

Using an unduly loose translation of the recordings of principal observations, Stümpke asserts that the "ancestor of the rhinogrades was plainly a shrew." This is plainly not a shrewd guess at all. Permit me to marshal my material for contradiction:

Morgenstern, in typically poetic fashion, uses a poem to present the nasobēm to a world which within a few brief decades was to be presented with such other precious gifts as nasal sprays and nasal twangs.

Evidence cited in that poem indicates that *Nasobema lyricum* was at least the size of an adult rhinoceros or possibly a very large moose.

In describing the creature, Morgenstern says that it "schreitet." The German schreiten denotes a method of locomotion which in English we would call to stride or to proceed majestically. This can hardly be said of a shrew, but is appropriate of a large, somewhat pompous beast which ponderously stomps about on its noses.

I am suggesting that the point here presented will force complete re-examination of all basic concepts in rhinogradology, together with an enormous amount of phylogenic study by some of our best minds who are currently engaged in study for the other NASA (*not* the Nasobema and Supraterrestrial Agency). This research will probably deplete all uncommitted research grant funds, so that G. G. Simpson may not be successful in obtaining fiscal support for further translations of rhinogradomemorabilia.

I am therefore adding here my own feeble effort, freely adapted from the German, in which I have carefully avoided references to such un-American encyclopedic works as Brehm, Meyer, or Brockhaus:

The Nasobēm

It nose-strides firmly through the ferns
That nasobēm of Morgenstern's.
Its calf accompanies the critter
Which is devoted to its litter.

You will not find the genus listed
As public proof that it existed
In zo-o-catalogues; its sire
Was Morgenstern's poetic lyre.

But, none-the-less, the nasobēm
Strides with its calf and without shame
Just as this little rhyme discloses
Along its way upon its noses.

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I am quite fascinated by "the most startling zoological event so far in the 20th century—the discovery of the Rhinogradentia. . . ." It broadens my education as a physical scientist beyond my usual sources of information such as the physicist R. W. Wood.

Some years ago I was greatly impressed by the discoveries of the British Museum's expedition to the Gobi Desert, reported in Augustus C. Fotheringham's monograph on *Eoornis Pterovelox Gobiensis* (Buighleigh Press, London, 1928). This was reviewed in the *Cornell Daily Sun* of 6 March 1934, and the monograph was reprinted in 1948 in a fourth edition, of which I have a copy.

The discovery and the remarkably full descriptions of this bird, including its habits, life history, anatomy, cytology, physiology, pathology, and social and moral significance, together with 38 photographs and drawings deserve to be recalled as another "startling zoological event" of the 20th century.

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## Report Evaluation: Quality or Quantity

No one can question the validity of your editorial [*Science* **140**, 577 (10 May 1963)] entitled "Some needed reforms," and I am sure that we deplore those practices that you deplore, endorse those corrections that you suggest, and generally agree with your statements.

However, you failed to mention one reform, a reform that would call upon university administrators to devote more time to evaluation of the quality of research reports, and much less to quantity, when deciding upon increases in rank, salary, or both.

Contrary to general opinion, research people have not resigned membership in the human race. We too have assumed responsibility for mortgages, education of our children, medical expenses and so forth. University administrations frequently deny the existence of a "publish or perish" philosophy, but their actions deny their words. In practice the philosophy is based on a count of published papers rather than a weighing of their worth.

In light of this, who can honestly condemn the researcher who takes the easier path and publishes frequently if not well?

I find myself incapable of proposing means of implementation. If you can devise a way for those who determine our futures to evaluate papers on their worth, we shall all be in your debt.

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