

Starting 12 miles northwest of Washington, where the new Circumferential Highway crosses the Potomac, is the DAVID TAYLOR MODEL BASIN ①, a complex of four laboratories (Hydromechanics, Structural Mechanics, Aerodynamics & Applied Mathematics) conducting fundamental & applied research in submarine, surface ship, aircraft, and missile design concepts . . . applied mathematics . . . and related instrumentation. Moving from the River to White Oak, Maryland, we find the 875-acre NAVAL ORDNANCE LABORATORY ② where more than 1,000 graduate professionals (plus support personnel) originate, develop, and evaluate new ideas in surface, subsurface, air and space weaponry to a point where they will be reliable and effective with the fleet. More than 95 weapons devices developed at NOL are now in active use. Back towards the River, and delightfully situated on "Embassy Avenue" is the famous NAVAL OBSERVATORY ③ where astronomers and mathematicians pursue research in astrophysics, stellar positions, and celestial mechanics, as well as provide the almanacs and standards for time and frequency. Further southward along the River is the NAVAL RESEARCH LABORATORY ④, main basic research facility for the Office of Naval Research. NRL employs a wide variety of physicists, mathematicians, metallurgists, chemists, electronics and mechanical engineers—and is now adding advance laboratory facilities—to better investigate all the physical sciences with the end objective of improving materials, techniques, and systems for the entire Navy. Come away from the Potomac River again just east of the D.C. line, where the NAVAL OCEANOGRAPHIC OFFICE (formerly the Hydrographic Office) ⑤ conducts environmental investigations and develops new techniques and equipments in oceanography, hydrography, gravity, magnetism, instrumentation and related navigational science. Once more along the ever-widening Potomac, welcome to Indian Head, Maryland, and the NAVAL PROPELLANT PLANT ⑥ where chemists, chemical engineers, and related-area professionals research and develop processes, materials, handling devices and pilot plant operations of solid and liquid propellants. They manufacture, inspect, and test missile propulsion units as well. A few miles farther south and across the Potomac is Dahlgren, Virginia, home of the NAVAL WEAPONS LABORATORY ⑦. NWL performs two broad-ranging functions; first, in studying and analyzing ballistics, astronautics, and advanced weapons systems through basic & applied research in mathematics, physics and engineering . . . and second, in working on various classified DOD projects with the latest computer technology and systems. Finally, we reach the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and the NAVAL AIR TEST CENTER ⑧, Patuxent River, Maryland. Here, aerospace experts perform exhaustive flight evaluations of advanced aircraft, and of airborne weapons systems as well. Much thought is given to improving carrier-based operations (launch and recovery in particular) . . . and all kinds of aircraft systems (radar, radio, data link, iff, ecm, computers, etc.). Today, nearly half of the Center's professional efforts involve research.

Why don't you get in touch with one or more of these eight U. S. NAVAL LABORATORIES OF THE POTOMAC . . . where research is king.

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rapidly growing teratoid tumors unlike any he had ever observed after inoculation of untreated embryos.

It would seem that the ether-soluble substance described by Reinke may be similar to or the same as retene, as described by Szent-Györgi *et al.*

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#### References

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2. W. H. Woglom, *The Study of Experimental Cancer: A Review* (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1913).
3. Askanazy, *Wien. Med. Wochschr.* 59, 2518, 2578 (1909); *Zentr. Allgem. Pathol. Anat.* 20, 1039 (1909).

### Majority Opinion: Right or Wrong?

In a democracy so much emphasis is given to the majority opinion that it is generally assumed that the majority is right. "Fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong." I would like to raise the question as to whether or not the opinion of the majority is almost always wrong.

History abounds with examples of popular opinion later proved to be incorrect and absurd. The Crusades of the Middle Ages are typical—especially the Children's Crusade in which thousands of young children were sacrificed for no purpose. The search for the Holy Grail and the Fountain of Youth involved large groups of so-called intellectuals. A mania for dancing in the streets was almost universal at one period of European history. The inquisition and witch burning have been popular enterprises. Wars in general have proved totally ineffective and unnecessary. Nothing was sillier than our own destructive Civil War which could have been averted if the opinion of a small minority had been given consideration. In more recent times the German slaughter of the Jews and our own experience with prohibition have furnished plenty of evidence that majority opinion has been found wrong after temporary emotions have subsided.

All this leads me to wonder if we are not engaged in another misdirected effort for man-in-space navigation. Unquestionably, the expenditure of hundreds of billions of dollars for these projects has the majority support of the public and Congress. In attempting to push these vast engineering projects by

a crash program, we are neglecting fundamental scientific work on properties of material and its environment and the determination of basic constants and knowledge that would lead to a more effective solution of the major enterprises if later they were still considered to be worth our effort. In fact what few real accomplishments have been made along basic research are suppressed if they tend to minimize the development of man-operated rocket ships. For example, there is plenty of spectroscopic evidence published by Kiess and colleagues that the atmosphere of Mars consists primarily of the oxides of nitrogen, yet propaganda is prevalent for a hundred billion dollar space landing in order to study the assumed vegetation and life which present evidence proves cannot exist. I believe these vast sums could be better spent in other ways, with just a few thousand dollars for spectroscopic work on planetary atmospheres by spectroscopists rather than publicity seekers. The future will undoubtedly disclose that the present majority opinion and enthusiasm for plunging into these costly space efforts were ill-advised, both from the scientific and from the political standpoint.

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### Clipping and Conflict

Each week *Science* places in conflict those of its readers who clip out articles and reports of particular interest in order to file them by topic. In the 30 August issue, for example, there were seven articles on behavior and behavioral mechanisms which were massed together on pages 820 to 831. It is impossible to separate all seven of these articles without mutilating many of them, and one is forced to decide which relevant articles to mutilate and which to save, even though he may want to save them all.

Readers would not have to face this conflict if articles and reports on closely related topics were not placed next to each other—that is, if reports on physical and chemical problems were alternated with reports on biological and behavioral problems. The two reports in that issue on the West Ford dipole belt might well have been left together, followed by one of the be-