Letters

Resolution on Cancer

On 9 April, the Board of Directors of the American Association for Cancer Research adopted the following resolution:

The Board of Directors of the American Association for Cancer Research has examined the report of the National Panel of Consultants on the Conquest of Cancer, legislative proposal S34, the President's Health Message, and several other relevant source materials. The Board recognizes that relative advantages and disadvantages attend and coexist in any administrative mechanism for funding cancer research, that all the alternative proposals have not been formulated, and that changes from the status quo ante and in the proposals are still in progress. The Board believes that any program which is adopted must recognize the complexity of cancer, the requirement for long-term sustained national commitment, and the need for expanded resources. The Board further believes that any program which is adopted must incorporate the following characteristics:

1) Strong scientific leadership, with participation of the scientific community in formulation of short- and long-term plans and in evaluation of programs and priorities at all levels of decision and policy making.

2) Major emphasis on and support for training of young scientists and physicians in the broad range of life sciences, and funding for long-term career development in cancer research.

3) Substantially expanded support for individual exploratory studies of fundamental biological problems.

4) Continuation of the present research programs of the National Cancer Institute without impediment.

5) Construction of a coherent overall plan for certain areas of research which should be coordinated and focused on specific goals. Such a plan should be formulated after full consultation with, and appropriate participation by, the scientific community, to consider its value and its impact on other programs.

6) Adequate and continuing review of the entire program by wide segments of the scientific community.

7) Innovative mechanisms to translate advances in cancer research to application in human cancer with the least possible delay, with particular emphasis on prevention, control, and treatment.

Provided these essential characteristics are fulfilled, the Board believes that major acceleration in progress toward cancer control is possible with new funding.

EMIL FREI
University of Texas, M. D. Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute, Houston 77025

Relevant Research

In discussing the Nixon Administration's shift in support of scientific manpower development, from traineeships and fellowships toward research grants, Boffey (12 Mar., p. 985) quotes the President's science adviser, Edward E. David, as saying:

> [It is] very appropriate that people go into the fields in which research is being done in universities—this is a way of steering them into the places, into the fields where there is important work to be done.

If this response to the current cry for relevance truly represents the Administration's basic attitude about the role of science in America, we are in serious danger. Nothing will stifle the development of new advances more effectively than the deliberate channeling of young scientific minds into the tunnels of activity that strike some people as "important" in terms of today's immediate urgencies. As the richest nation in the world, we have the obligation to stimulate training and radical thinking for the long pull and distant goals, and we must accordingly encourage free intellectual development to the fullest possible extent. Does the Administration believe that this can be accomplished within the confining framework of mission-oriented research? "Important" though such research may be, its fruits are almost wholly technological and the spin-off of fundamentally new ideas is rare and, in any case, wholly incidental. We can see from the historical record that such a policy of research support is virtually certain to start us downward toward unimaginative, pedestrian research that will quickly leave us dangerously behind countries that pursue a more enlightened policy. . . .

I am a strong supporter of relevance in research but I believe that the pendulum has already swung too far in the direction of technologic priorities of questionable social value, and that we stand in serious danger of losing what little momentum remains in our national effort at basic or pure research —the wellsprings of all philosophical, scientific, and social advancement. I believe that we cannot afford to sacrifice the cultivation of intellectual curiosity in the interest of relevance and that we must continue to support both ends of the spectrum at all costs.

It is essential for those who recognize the hazard to move against it while there is still time. More action is necessary at the congressional level. Scientists should speak out now.

SHOLOM PEARLMAN
University of Colorado Medical Center, Denver 80220

Primate Management in Asia

The suggestions of Bermant and Chandrasekhar (Letters, 19 Feb.) are excellent, and provide several important solutions to some of the problems of primate conservation in Asia. If villagers are given an economic stake in the wild animals of their areas, they will recognize them as an asset and a source of economic gain. This could be true of other diminishing wildlife, such as black buck and grey jungle fowl as well as primates.

The field studies which Siddiqi, Pal, and I are now conducting in northern India have shown us that rhesus monkeys can exist in large groups in rural areas with relatively small home ranges (groups of 60 to 70 monkeys with home ranges of less than 6 hectares). In most cases, physical corrals for such groups are not necessary—the natural tendency of rhesus to remain in very limited areas, if food, water, cover, and reasonable protection are provided, is sufficient. Further, rhesus can be adequately supported on supplemental foods such as gram nuts; neem, tamarind, and peepul leaves; coarse fruits and vegetables; and low-cost grains, so that their damage to more important

agricultural crops is negligible. We are currently studying rural groups 12 miles north of Aligarh which illustrate these principles. These groups maintain outstandingly good productivity with very little cost or damage to villagers. Under proper rural management, rhesus monkeys provide a source of income and cultural interest for local people, and at the same time a valuable biological resource is fostered. We hope the ideas of Bermant and Chandrasekhar find wide distribution and favorable consideration.

CHARLES H. SOUTHWICK
4-A Orient Row,
Calcutta 17, India

Intourist: A Pleasant Experience

Romer's letter (23 Apr., p. 326), complaining about his experiences with Intourist in the U.S.S.R. should be considered in relation to general conditions in that country and to the conditions encountered by any tourist not speaking the native language. I spent May and June 1970 in the U.S.S.R. on the exchange program of the U.S.S.R. and U.S. national academies of science. After traveling once to Norosibirsk on my own, I was thereafter most pleased to have the help of Intourist. Thanks to this organization, the foreign tourist benefits from a special waiting room at airports with uncrowded meal facilities, on domestic airlines he can board the plane (one class, with no reservations) before the Russian travelers and thus can select the preferred seats and stay with his friends, and finally, he does not have to stand in line for either reservations or baggage registration. Thanks to the representative of Intourist in the Moscow hotel of the U.S.S.R Academy of Sciences where I was staying, I was provided, on short notice, with tickets for the opera or the ballet at the Bolshoi Theater, for concerts, and so forth. These events could not be attended without the help of Intourist because of the great demand for tickets.

Considering the still-limited tourist accommodations in the U.S.S.R. and the existing bureaucratic procedures, I found that Intourist was most helpful in relieving the foreign tourist of the numerous difficulties found when traveling alone. Is Romer aware of the vexations of the non–English speaking foreign tourist who, on arrival in the United States, attempts to book a flight or a hotel room, or reserve a seat at the Metropolitan Opera? It is even difficult for him to call home, since the New York operators handling the international lines to Europe do not speak or understand the foreign language involved.

ROGER W. JEANLOZ
Massachusetts General Hospital,
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

I have twice visited the U.S.S.R., once as a tourist in 1958, and again as a representative of the U.S. government to the 9th International Conference of Wildlife Biologists in 1969. For that conference Intourist arranged five tours and handled groups of 30 to 75 biologists flawlessly.

I personally took two tours, one near Moscow, another to eastern Siberia with a group. In 20 years of traveling around the world, I have never seen groups better handled. For example, after we visited Lake Baikal, Intourist informed us that the next day we would be flown to Brask to tour its massive hydroelectrical development. We, being biologists, objected and indicated that we would much prefer to spend time in primitive woodland habitats (the taiga). After some discussion, Intourist agreed, flew us to Brask, bussed us to the taiga, turned us loose there for half a day, fed us, and then gave us a quick tour of the hydroelectrical development. We were all flown back to Irkutsk, and the tour returned to Moscow while my wife and I took the Trans-Siberian railroad to the east coast. Accidentally, one of our bags was returned to Moscow with the tour group. Four days later at Khabarovsk our bag had been located, shipped across the U.S.S.R. by air, and returned to us.

A curse—yes, if the meeting organizers have not communicated their wishes effectively; a tremendous boon if matters have been properly arranged.

GARDINER BUMP
U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries
and Wildlife, Washington, D.C. 20240

Nutrients in Lake Erie

Hubschman suggests (12 Feb., p. 536) that massive harvesting of unspecified organisms from Lake Erie could remove sufficient nutrients to improve the polluted condition of the lake. Quantitative considerations indicate, however, that the amount of common nutrient element removed under such a program