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studies have shown. Some of these same studies have also shown that it may be wise to bring thorium into the overall fuel cycle soon, simultaneously breeding uranium-233 and plutonium for optimum neutron economy, plutonium dollar economy, and resource conservation. A "crossed-progeny," closed cycle breeder can be self-sustaining and ultimately free from dependence on central enrichment plants (as many competitor countries are well aware).

The closed cycle, nuclear electric-generating plant will cost more initially but, in the view of people who have looked into the problem, we can't afford to proceed very far without it. This should have a high national priority.

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Mercury in Meat

The article by Curley *et al.* ("Organic mercury identified as the cause of poisoning in humans and hogs," 2 Apr., p. 5), contains an error. The statement that "the present U.S. Food and Drug Administration tolerance limit for mercury in meat products is 0.5 ppm" is incorrect. The present interim guideline of 0.5 ppm applies to fish only.

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Air Pollution Consultants

I would like to suggest a means of relocating jobless engineers, which might, in addition, provide a vital health service not presently available.

Engineering scientists who have had experience in life support systems and clean room technology could be retrained to act as consultants in air pollution. This service would be available to physicians, who could evolve a group of air pollution monitors to visit patients in their homes and evaluate and advise. The patients who would benefit from this service would be those who suffer from chronic cardiorespiratory disease, cystic disease, and asthma. The medical profession could not ever provide this service, because of the demands on their time. This project could be carried out locally or under the di-

rection of some federal agency. It does not seem logical to me to spend money training a few engineers in administrative pollution matters, when the basic problem of pollution at this time is public ignorance of practical pollution measures.

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Alcohol Breath Tests

N. H. Spector (*Science*, 2 April, p. 57) states as his discovery that alcohol-breath tests cannot be taken within the first 15 to 20 minutes after ingestion of alcohol. Actually, for the last 40 years, ever since the inception of breath-alcohol tests, this has been recognized as one of the inherent limitations of this test.

The second reference of Spector's report (1) contains the following:

A period of approximately 15 minutes after the last ingestion of alcohol or its regurgitation, must elapse before the sample is obtained, to insure elimination of the possible effects of any residual mouth alcohol.

The Supreme Court of Washington in 1960 (Washington against Baker), specified that the police record has to indicate clearly that the breath-alcohol sample was obtained at least 15 minutes after ingestion of alcohol. Donigon in 1966 (2) repeated the requirement.

Currently, it is standard training procedure for police officers and technicians to wait 20 minutes before a breath-alcohol test, and judges throughout the country make sure that this procedure has been followed and is properly recorded. Within the last few years, there is to our knowledge only one report where the waiting period had not been observed, and not a single case where justice has miscarried on this basis.

We appreciate Spector's interest in our problem, but in this case, he raised a false alarm.

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References

1. Committee on Medicolegal Problems, *Alcohol and the Impaired Driver: A Manual on the Medicolegal Aspects of Chemical Tests for Intoxication* (American Medical Association, Chicago, 1968).
2. R. L. Donigon, *Chemical Tests and the Law* (Traffic Institute of Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., 1966), p. 68.