I agree with DeVault that the difficulty of selling the metric system to nontechnical people is semantic rather than technical, but I disagree with his approach.

We can sell the metric system by pointing out its advantages in computation (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division for nontechnical persons) and resulting standardization [to both nontechnical and technical persons; for example, the garage mechanic must now sort out different sizes—SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers), English, and metric].

Yet, we cannot teach the metric system simply by teaching equivalents (for example, DeVault's new inch). Experienced teachers of foreign languages know that students learn a language by using it, not simply by learning vocabulary. By analogy, we can best learn the metric system by using it. Many readers of *Science*, including myself, teach; I suggest *we* (not the amorphous they) use the metric system exclusively in our courses. Quickly we would learn to think metric and live metric.

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Pollution Taxation

Richard Wilson's suggestion of a tax based on the product of air pollution concentration and the affected population density would appear to have limitations not covered in his report (13 Oct. 1972, p. 182). With his scheme in effect, areas of low population concentration would suddenly become economically desirable locations for heavily polluting industries. Wilderness areas would then suffer; the rights of minorities (homeowners, scientific investigators, and appreciative visitors) in these areas would then be subject to gross abuse ("I moved to the city because I couldn't stand the pollution in the country").

There is more to the pollution problem than just its effect upon the health of the people. We must be concerned with our paucity of knowledge of perhaps irreversible trip points in nature (just what are the factors initiating an ice age?). From a worldwide viewpoint, any advantages accrued by limiting pollution in heavily populated areas would be speedily nullified by the relatively uncontrolled emissions in remote areas.

Wilson's final statements, ". . . the tax should be related to people because smog where there are no people is unimportant" and "there are mountain valleys filled with smog from natural NO_x, but no one is worried about this natural smog," at best indicate an unnecessary pessimism concerning the interests of the environmental community.

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I believe my proposed tax will safeguard the rights of those in the countryside much better than current procedures. Present air quality standards specify a definite limit below which air quality is considered adequate (although there is some litigation in progress on this).

A common way of meeting such standards is to disperse the pollutant. Great Britain, for example, already has many tall stacks from power stations located in the countryside. Complaints have been reported from Sweden and Norway.

My proposed tax would continue to encourage this dispersal, but a simple computation of the tax based on the numbers I propose shows that there are very few areas in the world where there would not be an economic incentive to install good air pollution control equipment. At the moment there is almost no incentive.

Of course, there are limitations in any simple formula, and it is possible that my formula will not suffice to keep global, man-made sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions to a small fraction of natural emissions (the present U.S. figure is about 20 percent). If so, I agree that other measures will be necessary.

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Artifacts or Geofacts?

Charles Dawson, presumed architect of one of the greatest scientific hoaxes—Piltdown man—devised in the early part of this century a simple experiment that now could be used to support one facet of the argument Vance Haynes advances (27 July, p. 305) about the ori-