LETTERS

Details of the DeFunis Case

John Walsh, in his article "Universities and the law: Legislation, regulation, litigation" (News and Comment, 23 Apr., p. 354), refers to the University of Washington and says that "with about 15,000 students, it is the second largest employer in Seattle." The reference should have been to 15,000 employees, not students, since more than 35,000 students are currently registered at the University of Washington.

In his discussion of the DeFunis case, Walsh omits a stage of the proceedings which is quite important. While DeFunis won his case in a lower court, the University appealed it to the Supreme Court of the State of Washington, which reversed the lower court's decision and upheld the position of the University of Washington. Thereafter DeFunis appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, where the case was ultimately declared moot. Because the University had complied with the lower court's order requiring DeFunis's admission, and Justice Douglas had stayed any change of that order pending DeFunis's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, DeFunis was able to remain in school during the entire pendency of the litigation.

Otherwise, Walsh's article performs a useful service in describing the increasingly heavy involvement of courts and lawyers in the affairs of higher education.

JAMES B. WILSON
University of Washington Division, Office of the Attorney General, State of Washington, Seattle 98195

Energy in the Soviet Union

Philip H. Abelson's editorial "Energy diplomacy" (30 Apr., p. 429) is one of the most significant he has written. However, in comparing U.S. and Soviet resources, he mentions only oil and natural gas. The unfortunate aspect of the problem is that the Soviets are leading the Americans in almost every aspect of the energy problem.

The Soviet Union has five huge river systems and a considerable part of the Amur system, which they share with the People's Republic of China. Although the Dnieper River system has been fully developed to take advantage of its hydroelectric capabilities and the Volga is rapidly being developed (*1*), the rivers of Siberia are only in the early stages of development. Full development of the hydroelectric potential of all these river systems could provide the complete electrical needs (residential, commercial, and industrial) for between 70 million and 100 million people. One source estimates that the Soviets may possess as much as 12 percent of the world's potential hydroelectric power (*2*).

In the nuclear energy field the Soviets now have a prototype breeder reactor in operation (*3*), whereas the United States won't have its prototype in operation until some time in the 1980's. One of the world's largest research programs on nuclear fusion has been in existence in the Soviet Union for many years, including research on both magnetically confined plasmas (*4*) and laser fusion (*5*). The concept of the Tokamak, now used in both the U.S. and Soviet research programs, originated in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union also has one of the two existing electric generating stations using tidal power (*6*) and, even though small, it is one more tidal energy plant than the United States possesses. The Soviets also have significant research and development programs in other energy areas, such as MHD (magnetohydrodynamics) (*7*) and geothermal (*8*). About the only area in which the United States appears to have a significant lead over the Soviets is in solar energy, but we are only beginning to emphasize this source.

While we grow more and more dependent on foreign oil as our primary source of energy, the Soviets continue to develop and amass domestic energy resources. These two distinctly different courses of action could easily create a significant energy imbalance in the not-too-distant future. All the talk about the relative strengths of the two countries would then become nothing more than hollow rhetoric.

C. SHARP COOK
Department of Physics, University of Texas, El Paso 79968

References

1. D. M. Yourinov, I. L. Sapir, I. A. Terman, R. I. Bobrov, Paper 4.2-19 presented at the 9th World Energy Conference, Detroit Mich., September 1974.
2. I. F. Elliott, *The Soviet Energy Balance* (Praeger, New York, 1974), p. 6.
3. S. Rippon, *New Sci.* **68**, 570 (1975).
4. B. B. Kadomtsev and T. K. Fowler, *Phys. Today* **28** (No. 11), 36 (1975).
5. H. R. Leuchtag, *ibid.*, p. 55.
6. L. B. Bernstein, in *Tidal Power*, T. J. Gray and O. K. Gashus, Eds. (Plenum, New York, 1972), pp. 215–238.
7. A. Kantrowitz and R. J. Rosa, in *Physics and the Energy Problem—1974*, M. D. Fiske and W. W. Havens, Jr., Eds. (American Institute of Physics, New York, 1974), pp. 357–378.
8. J. B. Koenig, in *Geothermal Energy*, P. Kruger and C. Otte, Eds. (Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, Calif., 1973), pp. 15–58.