

bow would be) and knowing what to look for. The chance of success would justify many trials, for the game would be worth the candle.

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THE NAMING OF METHODS, PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES FOR AUTHORS

FOR some time, it has been the custom to give the name or names of authors to various types of discoveries and methods. However, it is not always easy to assign credit to a particular individual, since two or more workers or scientific groups may announce some new fact or series of facts at about the same time. There are probably a great number of such instances that have occurred and the following serve to illustrate the point: (1) the discovery of oxygen by Scheele and Priestley, and (2) the isolation of and the identification of crystalline Vitamin C by King and Szent-Györgyi.

The purpose of this note is to call attention to the name of the reaction or process for determining alcohol by the potassium bichromate-sulphuric acid method. In 1846, Thomson¹ announced that alcohol was oxidized to aldehyde in the presence of potassium bichromate and sulphuric acid and that the green oxide of chrome was produced, in an article, "On the Mode of Testing the Presence of Minute Quantities of Alcohol." It was not until 1896 that Nieloux² reported the use of this reaction in a method for determining alcohol. However, the recent literature gives credit to Nieloux for the method, and some authors have even called it the Nieloux method.

The oversight by Nieloux in not referring to the paper by Thomson does not detract from the latter's report, and, because of the priority of this report, we suggest that the procedure that involves the reduction of a potassium bichromate-sulphuric acid solution be named the Thomson-Nieloux method. The solution not only gives a green color with alcohol, but it does when it is treated with a variety of substances such as glucose, levulose, formalin, paraldehyde, diethyl ether, ethyl acetate and lactic acid.

It is possible that Nieloux did not notice the paper by Thomson, since that sort of oversight has inadvertently happened many times. One is often aware that the authors of certain publications have either made no great effort to search the literature or else ignored contributions by other individuals.

The reason for not referring to previous work in one's field of study is always difficult to explain and the custom, if practiced continuously, will lessen the

value of one's contributions. The custom of using only the references to papers from one's own laboratory or chiefly those references by one's countrymen seems to be practiced more widely in some other countries than in the United States. This latter condition might be partially explained by the fact that numerous abstracting and indexing facilities are readily available to most scientists in this country.

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GOVERNMENT AID TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

DR. COWDRY's article in the June 22, 1945, issue of *SCIENCE* ably presents the plight of endowed institutions of higher learning resulting from the drying up of endowment sources and the fall in interest rates. As a remedy he advocates a federal subsidy in the form of permission to purchase specially issued Government bonds yielding an interest rate higher than that presently obtainable on other securities, but desires that the aid be granted without federal control being exercised upon the institutions thus aided.

There appears to be a feeling that Government control is akin to a plague which defiles whatever it touches. While some projects may have experienced unfortunate results under Government control, others, such as the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Securities Exchange Commission, are admitted even by their early critics to have substantially achieved their objects; and may I suggest that, in any case where a grant of public money is involved, the granting of such money for any project, however worthy, without suitable controls, would be a betrayal of public trust. When private wealth bestows its largess upon educational institutions, it invariably does so under carefully stipulated conditions. By what logic can it be maintained that public funds should be granted to the same institutions without Government control being exercised in the public interest?

However excellent our private institutions of advanced learning may be, and however well they may have carried the torch of independent thought, it is rumored that certain undemocratic practices have crept into the administration of some of them relating to discrimination in the faculties and student bodies against certain groups. It would therefore appear that any Government subsidy should be granted only on full compliance with certain minimum requirements. An institution to receive such help should be one in which:

¹ Robert D. Thomson, *Monthly Jour. Med. Sc. London*, 6: 411-413, 1846.

² Maurice Nieloux, *Compt. rend. Soc. de biol.*, 10.s., 3: 841-846, 1896.