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Letters

Deferring to a Minority

Your news note on the U.N. "population explosion" debate [*Science* 135, 29 (5 Jan. 1962)] has, if I read it correctly, some disturbing implications that may have escaped many readers.

The implication is clear that the government of the United States is deferring, on a matter of transcendent international importance, to political pressure by a religious minority. You would also seem to suggest that while the U.S. government is sufficiently concerned with the welfare of the United Nations to avoid "arousing further antipathy to that troubled organization," it is convinced that the minority group would not sufficiently share such concern to refrain from action that would generate antipathy.

The exercise of the veto power by this particular church is not new to anyone familiar with the human population problem. It is significant, however, that this should be recognized in the pages of *Science*.

This is a matter where time is of the essence, since, with even the full support of the United Nations and the U.S. government, progress in reducing population growth is sure to be slow, initially at least. Meanwhile 100 million babies a year are born, many of them foreordained to die miserable and painful deaths. Those who live will often live at the expense of those born earlier.

WILLIAM VOGT

140 Riverside Drive, New York

Allowance for Overhead

The editorial entitled "Costly cash" [*Science* 134, 2009 (1961)] does not give a completely accurate picture with respect to overhead charges on government-supported research contracts and grants. While it is true that National Science Foundation grants give only 20 percent, this 20 percent is applicable to all charges, including apparatus, supplies, and so on. The larger overhead allowances in grants from other agencies are usually applied only to direct salary charges. Thus, the National Science Foundation's 20 percent might be equivalent to Office of Naval Research overhead allowances of 40 percent. Furthermore, some agencies stipulate that there must be



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a university contribution to the total research cost of a project, the amount varying from perhaps 5 to 50 percent. There is also the consideration that, at the termination of the contract or grant, the title to capital equipment rests either with the government or with the university. Thus, it would seem that we have to look beyond the percentage figure in order to obtain a realistic evaluation of overhead allowances.

LEONARD MULDAWER
Temple University,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I have read with considerable interest the editorial entitled "Costly cash." For your information, during 1960-61, Western Reserve University, while spending \$5.018 million in federal and private funds for project research, incurred an obligation for unreimbursed indirect costs of \$665,000. I should like to point out that while grants, particularly those from the U.S. Public Health Service, do not provide for anything like sufficient overhead, many nonfederal sources are even less generous. Thus it seems to me that we must not level such charges against the federal government alone.

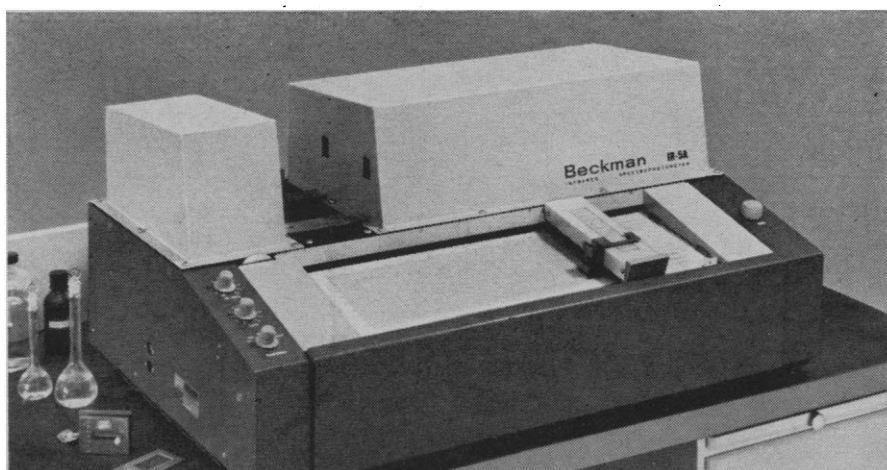
On the basis of a formula worked out by the government audit agency we have determined that 26.2 percent of the total costs is an allowable charge for indirect costs on research projects. While we have not, to date, turned down any grant because of inadequate allowance for overhead, there is little doubt in my mind that this possibility will become increasingly less remote in the years ahead.

WILLIAM M. HESTON
Western Reserve University,
Cleveland, Ohio

The Rise of Sap

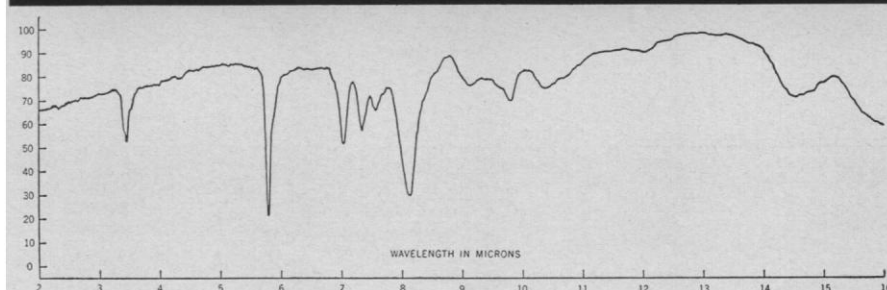
In the article "Cohesive lift of sap in the rattan vine" [*Science* 134, 1835 (1961)], Scholander, Hemmingsen, and Garvey state that the rise of sap in tall trees has been puzzling "for more than a century" and that the cohesion theory of Dixon and Joly (1894) and Askenasy (1895) is generally accepted.

This very problem was considered by the reverend Stephen Hales (1677-1761) in the early years of the 18th century. Hales, known as the first man to have measured arterial blood pressure [*Haemostatics* (1733)], was inter-



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