

that is cut. However, it does not seem unreasonable that funds spent to improve and sharpen an organization's animate tools should be at least as great as those spent for the same purpose on hardware. This may provide a measure of how much should be spent on fundamental research.

JOHN F. G. HICKS
2404 Anson Drive, Columbus, Ohio

Water

Abelson's editorial "Water for North America" (8 Jan., p. 113) is exciting. It represents very big thinking. But it leads to a number of critical questions. The figure Abelson gives for present use of water in the United States— 1.25×10^9 cubic meters (350×10^9 gallons) daily—works out to about 6.65 m^3 per capita. What uses of water are included in this figure? C. C. Bradley ["Human water needs and water use in America," *Science* **138**, 489 (1962)] estimates total per capita daily use as 57 m^3 . This includes the enormous amount of water lost through transpiration by food and fiber plants and the loss by evaporation of water supplied to but not used by the plants. When the very great need for water to produce a pound of paper is considered, for example—years of transpiration stream passing through the pulpwood tree plus all the water used in manufacturing the paper and transporting it to the consumer—Bradley's estimate seems more realistic.

Abelson rightly points out that too much is expected of desalination and that the transport of desalted water inland in great quantities would be very expensive. Another problem would be that of disposing of the accumulated mountains of salt. And huge nuclear reactors require huge supplies of cooling water and means of disposing of this water after it is heated. The use of sea water in such plants could well mean thermal pollution of the continental-shelf marine habitat, the most productive part of the ocean. That irritating ecological question "At the expense of what?" rears its head whenever man plans any alteration of environment. Perhaps another \$100 billion is needed to correct our ecological sins of the past—to clean up our filthy waters.

The author says, "Use of the potential supplies would solve most of the continent's water problems for as long

as 100 years." A hundred years is a very short period in human evolution. What will happen after that? Certainly the greatest of all problems in the future of man is one of human engineering. How can man control his reproduction, and do so without a disastrously differential birth rate which would reduce the quantity and wreck the quality of the species? Are we ready to accept the task of steering human evolution? The words of Julian Huxley, "I hold strongly that without some knowledge of evolution one cannot hope to arrive at a true picture of human destiny, or even approach the problem correctly," are prophetic indeed.

F. J. TREMBLEY
Department of Biology, Lehigh
University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

The proposal concerning "Water for North America" in Abelson's editorial is typical of the sort of approach we in Canada have been familiar with throughout our history. Our resources are to be disposed of to your advantage. [The editorial described a plan, now under study by a Senate subcommittee, whereby "through a series of dams, lifts, tunnels, and canals, water from Canada and the northwestern United States would be conducted to the Great Lakes and to the southwestern United States and Mexico."]

May we suggest instead that it would be more logical for the people to move to where the water is? This would help to relieve some of the problems associated with overcrowding in your country, such as water and air pollution, traffic jams, and that cooped-up feeling. We would be glad to welcome you to our invigorating climate; please bring industries with you. And thanks again for the wooden nutmegs.

D. M. SMITH
175 Daniel Avenue, Ottawa 3, Ontario

. . . The proposal to intercept a substantial portion of the flow of the Columbia River and divert it eastward and southward should be a cause of great concern for every citizen of the Northwest. Evidently the people of that region are to stand idly by while a sizable measure of one of the area's most important resources flows away so that the desert may bloom in some distant place. Fresh water is a natural resource in the same sense that crude oil and iron ore are natural resources. Do California and Texas give away

crude oil? Does Minnesota give away iron ore? Why should the Northwest be expected to supply southern California or any other place with free water? If the California boom is limited by the availability of fresh water, then I say let it be so limited.

Any further tampering with the Columbia would surely destroy the salmon fishery along the West Coast, which is already in difficulty, despite the construction of new hatcheries, ladders, and so on.

If the Northwest supplies free water for much of the remainder of the West, what will it receive in return?

CONRAD M. HESS
Institute of Marine Science,
University of Miami, Miami, Florida

Beware the Tax Collector

Woffle's editorial "Challenge to tax exemption" (9 Oct. 1964, p. 175) indicates to me that the existence of many journals and scientific societies will be threatened if the Internal Revenue Service is permitted to continue its present line of attack. To further demonstrate that the IRS is dedicated to undermining these organizations in every possible manner, I would like to cite an example to show that the attack has been launched at another level.

One of our scientists here was called before the local IRS agent and informed that he could not list journals as a tax deduction. The reasons given for this action were that employers do not require employees to subscribe to journals—otherwise they would reimburse them for the expenditure—and that, since the employer provides a library with all the necessary journals, the individual buys personal copies only for his own convenience.

The scientist attempted to appeal on the grounds that he used the journals while preparing technical publications on his own time. The IRS officer asked how much remuneration he received from these publications. Upon being told that there was none, he declared that they must fall in the category of a hobby. The scientist paid the tax, hoping for fairer treatment on a later appeal. At this time, the original decision still stands.

LESLIE P. MCCARTY
2104 Hillgrove Parkway,
Midland, Michigan