heart of conversation [see F. Fremont-Smith, *Amer. Inst. Biol. Sci. Bull.* **11**, 17 (1961); also "Conversation as Communication," 3rd Yates Lecture (Michigan Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association, 1961)]. The problems of pride, egotism, tension, and rivalries referred to in the editorial are usually reduced to manageable proportions when one can establish for the group an atmosphere of "free-floating security."

At the New York Academy of Sciences we are developing a training program for conference organizers, chairmen, and discussion leaders to improve the management of such small conferences by university centers, re-research organizations, and professional organizations. I would be grateful for information about other ongoing conference programs which have been organized primarily for discussion and exchange of ideas.

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Language among Scientists

President de Gaulle desires wider use of French at international scientific meetings (News and Comment, 16 Apr., p. 350). Some problems should be noted. Working documents for intergovernmental meetings are usually prepared at the last minute by a small and overworked secretariat. In scientific fields it is not uncommon for this work to be done in English. In order for such working papers to be translated into French (or other languages of possibly greater scientific importance), the original version must be turned over to a group of translators, who may not accord a high priority to the job and who almost certainly are unfamiliar with the scientific terminology. In the fullness of time, draft translations are returned to the originating office, which is then faced with a substantial and time-consuming editing job if the original meaning is to be preserved. Thus the distribution of working papers is further delayed, and the participants at such meetings may find themselves in plenary session before having access to the necessary background information. Needless to say, the translation process not only slows down considerably the already ponderous international machinery, but costs a great deal of money that might be put to better use. Most participants in international scientific meetings can at least read English and would probably prefer to receive background papers as early as possible, even if not in their own language.

Another problem concerns interpretation at meetings, particularly those of an informal character (steering committees, working groups, and the like). Interpretation, whether consecutive or simultaneous, is expensive, and good interpreters are hard to find. It often occurs that everyone in the room could work comfortably in English, yet for chauvinistic reasons a participant will insist on using his own language, thus slowing down communication and increasing expenses.

As noted in the article in *Science*, English seems to have become the lingua franca of science. Scientists from the non-English-speaking world have learned to live with this in the interests of getting their work done. One hopes that President de Gaulle, having said his piece for the glory of France, will let the scientists go about their business in the *ad hoc* way they have devised.

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Metric Conversion: Petition to Congress

The following resolution was passed unanimously by the American Institute of Nutrition at its annual meeting on 10 April:

Whereas, more than 90% of the world's population now operates under the metric system, and whereas the *Journal of Nutrition, Poultry Science, Journal of Animal Science, Journal of Dairy Science, Food Chemicals Codex*, and publications of the National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council now use or will use metric weights and measures exclusively, be it therefore resolved that the American Institute of Nutrition in its Annual Meeting, April 10, 1965, recommends *passage of the bills now before Congress to study feasibility and practicability of conversion to the metric system of weights and measures for general use in the United States.* Be it further resolved that copies of this resolution be sent to committees concerned with metric conversion study bills S. 774, H.R. 2626, H.R. 38, and H.R. 1154 to achieve the above objective.

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