Letters

Consultants and Hatch Act

Scientists who are consultants to the government as members of study sections of the National Institutes of Health have recently been asked to sign an appointment affidavit (standard form 61). This affidavit states that the appointee will uphold the constitution, will not join certain organizations, will not strike against the government, and will not buy his job. A detailed set of prohibitions, specifying that the signer is subject to the Hatch Act and will not take an active part in politics, is attached to the form.

We believe that a clear distinction should be maintained between members of the civil service and those private citizens who are asked on occasion to provide expert advice to the civil service. The government is best served by advisers drawn from the community at large rather than by men who have given up their rights of political expression. We urge those who are presented with these appointment affidavits to consider them carefully before they submit to restrictions which may be proper only for the executive civil service.

IRWIN W. SIZER
JOHN M. BUCHANAN
HANS-LUKAS TEUBER
PATRICK D. WALL

Department of Biology,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
Cambridge 02139

Hark to the Elder Institutions!

In discussing the university's role in the dynamic and exciting evolution of Canadian history, you gave only a part, a minor part, of the story by concentrating on one institution (News and Comment, 18 Nov., p. 868). We, at Laval, are proud of the awakening role being played by our daughter institution *en province*, but it is here in the capital of French Canada that the thinking is being done and the decisions are being made. For decades, Laval has given the lead in a wide spectrum of activities: Cardinal Roy appointed the first lay vice-rector in French Canada; Laval is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its Faculty of Social Science; the most liberal statutes in North America are not in the proposal stage—they have been in force for a year; we inhabit the first university city in Quebec Province, and are exploiting the first Van de Graaff accelerator, and so on.

From the standpoint of influencing Quebec's development and the Province's relations with the rest of Canada, Montreal will lack Laval University's strategic position of being at the heart of Quebec's legislative and cultural activity. A count of the deputy ministers in Quebec's government suffices to reveal the depth of Laval's dynamic contribution. In discussing French Canada, you should have come where the action is!

LARKIN KERWIN

Department of Physics,
Laval University,
Quebec 10, Canada

Carter did not mention another university which serves French Canada —the University of Ottawa was founded in 1848 as a bilingual and bicultural institution in the service of a bilingual and bicultural country, and until recently it was the only university with this purpose. Like Montreal, Ottawa is located at the interface of the two cultures. While Ottawa is a much smaller city, it has unique importance because it is the national capital, and hence the hopes, fears, and problems of both cultures center upon Ottawa out of all proportion to its size. If English dominance in the business affairs of Montreal is a major factor in French Canadian discontent, surely an equal strain upon Confederation is caused by the failure of legal recognition of the French language by the City of Ottawa, of which about half of the population is French speaking, and by the Government of Ontario. The latter is particularly important because Ottawa, unlike Washington, is not a federal district; it is a part of the Province of Ontario, and it is subject to the laws of that predominantly English province.

The new 1965 charter gives the University of Ottawa the specific duty "to further bilingualism and biculturalism and to preserve and develop French culture in Ontario." All students are required to study both French and English. Yet, almost all of our French speaking students become fluent in English, while relatively few of our English speaking students become fluent in French.

The relative role of the two languages varies greatly among the faculties. Thus, French is the exclusive language of the *Faculté de Droit civil*, which trains lawyers for the Bar of Québec, but English is strongly predominant in the Faculty of Common Law, which trains lawyers for the Bar of Ontario. In the Faculty of Arts, almost any course may be taken in either language. In the Faculty of Science, all of the basic courses are given in both languages, but the advanced courses are given in English, except in the occasional class in which professor and students all happen to be French. The Faculty of Medicine was founded in 1945 with the intention of using the two languages interchangeably. This, however, proved to be a vain hope, because the English speaking students generally did not have adequate command of French.

The Faculty of Science, established in 1953, is now second in size only to the Faculty of Arts, and its full time staff of nearly 100, are almost all engaged in research. Research is financed by grants from the National Research Council of Canada, the Medical Research Council, the Defence Research Board, and various other agencies.

We admire our colleagues at the University of Montreal for their contributions toward the solution of the problems of French Canada. We think, however, that the contributions of the University of Ottawa may be as significant. It is located at the most sensitive point of contact between the French and English cultures. Her graduates include large numbers from each culture who have learned to understand and respect the

other; granted that this has not been achieved universally nor without some friction. The University of Ottawa contributes her share to all levels of government, including the ministerial level, and, we believe, holds especial importance for the future of Confederation.

EDWARD O. DODSON
Department of Biology,
University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Parnassus Revisited

After self-administration of a drug, in the presence of a group of friends, a young English scientist reported:

> . . . a thrilling, extending from the chest to the extremities was almost immediately produced. I felt a sense of tangible extension, highly pleasurable, in every limb; my visible impressions were dazzling, and apparently magnified; I heard distinctly every sound in the room, and was perfectly aware of my situation. By degrees, as the pleasurable sensations increased, I lost all connection with external things; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through my mind, and were connected with words in such a manner as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. I existed in a world of newly-connected and newly-modified ideas; I theorised, I imagined that I made discoveries. When I was awakened from this semi-delirious trance . . . indignation and pride were the first feelings produced by the sight of the persons about me. My emotions were enthusiastic and sublime, and for a minute I walked around the room, perfectly regardless of what was said to me. As I recovered my former state of mind, I felt an inclination to communicate the discoveries I had made during the experiment . . . with the most intense belief and prophetic manner, I exclaimed . . . *"Nothing exists but thoughts! the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains."*

"Wild enjoyment" persisted for more than 2 hours. Marihuana? LSD? Mescaline? No, the drug was nitrous oxide; the scientist was Humphry Davy; the time was 1799 (*1*). Southey and Coleridge are said to have been inspired more to laughter than to poetry at ensuing laughing-gas parties. These anticipated the "ether frolics" of the past century and the "pot parties" and "LDS-trips" of today.

The fact that simple N_2O can elicit subjective responses resembling those caused by complex molecules, like LSD and mescaline, should give added perspective on the action of hallucinogenic drugs. Researchers hampered by the