

letters

can Physical Society being used for political purposes as the tone of the inflammatory resolutions proposed at the Chicago business meeting of the society indicated. No nation the size of the United States can remain free unless it is also strong, and those who would tear down our Defense Department would soon lose their freedoms if it did not exist. To try and place a stigma on scientists who do work for the Department of Defense is the first step towards repression of other groups with whom the vocal minority are not in sympathy. Radical students already control the kinds of work that can be presented at the Japanese Physical Society. Let's not let it happen here.

L. S. BIRKS
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No ABM for Washington

I agree with your July editorial, but wish to register my objection to the reported proposal to protect only Moscow and Washington, D.C. with the ABM. Since men residing in those two cities have control over the infamous red buttons, it appears to me the likelihood of their use would be reduced if Moscow and Washington, D.C. were the last cities to be protected.

J. S. HUEBNER
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at Riverside

No depletion of oxygen

I agree with much of what was said in the letter by Henry Knoll (July, page 11). However, I think it is unfortunate that he attempts to gain support for his position by citing the misleading comments by Lamont Cole regarding consumption of atmospheric oxygen by the burning of fossil fuels. The implication of Cole's remarks seems to be that we are headed for serious difficulties because of depletion of atmospheric oxygen. Actually, it is easy to calculate that if we were to burn in one fell swoop all available fossil fuels, we would consume roughly 1% of the oxygen in the atmosphere. We wouldn't even notice the loss!

There are many pollution problems to worry about. Loss of oxygen is not among them. Let's try hard to keep a rational perspective. We need nuclear power because we are eventually going to exhaust fossil fuels and because there are better uses for fossil fuels than burning them in central electricity-generating stations. However, fossil fuel will have to continue in this use for many years; so the pollution

problems associated with them must be solved, as pollution problems associated with nuclear fuels must also be solved.

It is not necessary to be against fossil fuels to be for nuclear power development, or vice versa. We need both energy sources.

HOWARD B. PALMER
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Nonscience majors

Although applied scientists *may* be able to do all for nonscience majors that P. L. Walker Jr says they can, they frequently don't. (See his letter, July, page 17.) As Ernst Mach said, "Economy of communication and of apprehension is of the very essence of science." I was schooled both ways, and I regret the many hours wasted under teachers too far out on the applied end of the spectrum. More fundamental approaches covered the same material better in one-tenth the time.

BRADLEY F. BENNETT
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Nuclear-energy risks

I would like to say that I enjoyed reading the article by Walter H. Jordan (May, page 32) and also that his arguments on the risk of nuclear energy compared to other activities are well taken. However, his statements on the risk of private flying appear to be misleading.

Taking the figures given in the article, the fatalities per hour of exposure are 8.4 times greater for private flying than for commercial airlines, instead of the 20 times stated in the paper. In addition, the commercial time involves only the process of getting from point A to point B, whereas the private flying includes the considerably more dangerous tasks of learning to fly, specialized flying (such as crop dusting) and stunt flying.

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Information-program questions

As I read the article "New Information Program for AIP" (December 1969, page 29), a number of questions and thoughts crossed my mind. The answers to all of them will have to be reached if your plans are to become completely effective. Assuming that I might have seen something that you didn't, I offer these thoughts to you: *Terminals*. Where would they be lo-

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