

## SI Units

SIR,—Much erudite discussion has been initiated by the adoption of SI units by some journals, notably those of the Royal Society. There are plenty of scientists well versed in the strange problems of electromagnetic units and dimensions, but may I as a sometime sailor raise a small squeal of protest at recent horrors perpetrated in the name of SI by *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc.* on my innocent nautical units.

A ship, everyone knows—even the French—travels at so many knots. An ocean current likewise, since it is usually combined with a ship's speed, is most frequently quoted in knots. There is nothing inherently inferior in knots (of celestial origin), certainly not in comparison with the abomination  $\text{m s}^{-1}$  with which I find my proof besmirched. Ask any sailor from Ordinary Seaman to Admiral of the Fleet to proceed at  $2.8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  when you mean  $5\frac{1}{2}$  knots and the response, though the request come from the Royal Society its very self, is likely to be nautical and brief.

To add insult to injury, the same proof describes the vessel I use as "94 Mg (tonnes) gross". This absurdity is what our SI fiends believe a gross tonnage of 94 is. Perhaps one day some of these megagrammage proponents would care to see how their precious unit is calculated—by taking a tape and measuring up (*inter alia*) the living accommodation on board.

There comes a stage when the SI-ing has to stop. Somebody in the cellars of Carlton House Terrace probably spends all his time taking the scientists' lingua franca and nano-ing and tesla-ing it. When he runs out of papers (and the present policy will soon ensure that), he might start on the classics. Prince Hal's injunction to Falstaff "not to come near my person by ten mile" is ripe for conversion and decimalization.

Yours faithfully,

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## University News

**Dr John Stewart Pate** has been appointed to a personal chair in plant physiology in the Department of Botany, **Queen's University of Belfast**.

**Dr T. J. Biscow** has been appointed to the second chair in physiology, **University of Bristol**.

**Dr Joseph E. Murray** has been appointed professor of surgery at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and the Children's Hospital Medical Center in the Faculty of Medicine, **Harvard University**.

**Dr A. M. James**, Queen Elizabeth College, London, has been appointed to the chair of physical chemistry, tenable at **Bedford College, London**.

**Dr J. K. Sutherland**, University of London, has been appointed professor of organic chemistry in the **University of Manchester**, in succession to Professor A. J. Birch.

A research council has been established at the **University of Moncton**, New Brunswick, to plan and coordinate research activities. **Dr Brian T. Newbold** has been appointed president of the council and full time director of research, and the other members of the council are **Dr Auréa Cormier**, School of Home Economics, **Dr Léonard LeBlanc**, Faculty of Science, **Father Jules Léger**, Department of History, **Dr Gaston Allaire**, Department of Music, **Dr Pierre Dion**, Psycho-Social Centre, and **Dr Emmanuel Sajous**, Department of Economics.

**Mr Gerald Dix** has been appointed to the chair of planning and the directorship of the Institute of Planning Studies in the **University of Nottingham**.

**Dr George Eason** has been appointed to the new chair of mathematics for applied scientists in the Department of Mathematics, **University of Strathclyde**.

## Appointments

**Dr Gordon I. Hobday** has been appointed managing director of **Boots Pure Drug Company Limited**, in succession to Mr Kenneth Williamson.

**Dr F. T. Hamblin**, at present chairman and managing director of ICI Deutschland GmbH and of ICI (Switzerland) AG, has been appointed to the new post of director of the **British Plastics Federation**.

## Announcements

The **Grand Prix Scientifique de la Ville de Paris** has been awarded to **Professor Lucien Malavard**.

**D. P. Rose**, University of Bradford, has been awarded the **Sir Walter Puckey Prize** in production engineering, administered by the Institution of Production Engineers.

**Dr George H. Mitchell** has been awarded the Clough memorial medal of the **Edinburgh Geological Society**, for his contributions to the knowledge of the geology of the Lake District, the West Riding of Yorkshire and the south of Scotland.

The **US National Science Foundation** will provide travel grants for about eighty scientists from the United States to attend the NATO advance study institutes to be held in Europe this summer. Applications should be made to the director of the appropriate institute.

The **Biochemical Society** has made the following awards: **the CIBA medal** to Professor T. W. Goodwin, Liverpool, for his work on the biosynthesis of carotenoids and plant sterols; **the Colworth medal** to Dr George Radda, Oxford, for his study of the role of flavins in biological systems.

The **Van den Berghs nutrition awards**—prizes of £500, £250 and £100—will be presented to the writers of the three best papers on the theme "Getting the Most out of Food". Entrants should be resident in the United Kingdom, and papers should be written in English and should not exceed 5,000 words. Further information can be obtained from Van den Berghs Ltd, Kildare House, Dorset Rise, London EC4.

The **Zoological Society of London** has made the following awards: **the Stanford Raffles Award**, to Mr Rex A. Jubb, Grahamstown, South Africa; **the Scientific Medal**, to Professor R. McN. Alexander, University of Leeds, Dr R. V. Short, University of Cambridge, and Professor T. R. E. Southwood, Imperial College, London; **the Thomas Henry Huxley Award**, to Dr Gillian D. Sewell, King's College, London.

The clean air awards, to be made by the National Society for Clean Air, will now be known as the **Arnold Marsh Clean Air Awards** in memory of Arnold Marsh, director of the society during 1928–68. Contributions to the cause of clean air by individuals, industry and local government authorities are eligible for the awards, which will be made in October. Further details can be obtained from the National Society for Clean Air, Field House, Breams Buildings, London EC4.

The council of the **Institute of Physics and the Physical Society** has made the following awards: **Guthrie medal and prize**, to Professor A. B. Pippard, University of Cambridge; **Rutherford medal and prize**, to Professor S. Devons, Columbia University; **Glazebrook medal**