

**University News:****Birmingham**

Dr John Hardwicke and Dr Kenneth Walton, both at present readers in the Department of Experimental Pathology, have been appointed to the newly established additional chairs of experimental pathology.

**Keele**

PROFESSOR R. J. FRANKENBERG, reader in sociology in the University of Manchester and at present on secondment as professor of sociology and dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the University of Zambia, has been appointed professor of sociology and head of the Department of Sociology.

**Sheffield**

DR P. N. ROBSON, at present reader in electrical engineering in University College, London, has been appointed to the second chair of electronic and electrical engineering.

**Appointments**

THE Minister of Technology has appointed the following new members to the Advisory Council on Technology: Dr J. M. Hill, chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority; Sir Frank Schon, part-time member of the Industrial Reorganization Corporation and of the National Research Development Corporation and a non-executive director of the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, Ltd; Sir William Swallow, chairman of the Shipbuilding Industry Board; Lord Wright of Ashton-under-Lyne, general secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers' Association and present chairman of the Trades Union Congress.

SIR JOHN HENNIKER-MAJOR, at present assistant under-secretary at the Foreign Office, supervising the African departments, has been appointed director-general of the British Council in succession to Sir Paul Sinker.

**Announcements**

THE Royal Geographical Society has made the following awards: *Founder's Medal* to W. B. Harland, Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge, for Arctic exploration and research; *Patron's Medal* to Professor A. Gansser, Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, for geological exploration and mapping of the Himalaya.

THE Seventh James B. Macelwane Award is to be presented to Michael B. McElroy of Kitt Peak National Observatory, near Tucson, Arizona, at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union. This award is given each year to a young scientist in recognition of his work in geophysical research.

**Meetings**

STEREOCHEMISTRY of Macromolecules, May 21-24, Venezia (Dr Giuseppe Zerbi, Istituto di Chimica Industriale del Politecnico, Piazza L. da Vinci 32, Milano).

SURGING Glaciers, June 6-8, Banff (C. M. Lockwood, Assistant Director, Department of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada).

NEW Olefin Reactions, June 25-26, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (Professor R. N. Haszeldine, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, PO Box No. 88, Sackville Street, Manchester 1).

CARBON and Graphite, July 2-5, University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Dr T. E. O'Hair, Department of Physical Chemistry, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne 1).

MOLECULAR Crystal Symposium, July 8-12, Technical University "Twente", Enschede (Professor J. Kommandeur, Laboratory for Physical Chemistry, The University, Bloemensingel 10, Groningen, The Netherlands).

CHEMISTRY of Natural Products, July 8-13, London (The Secretary, 5th International Symposium on the Chemistry of Natural Products, c/o The Chemical Society, Burlington House, London W1).

CRYSTAL Growth, July 15-19, University of Birmingham (Professor A. D. McQuillan, Department of Physical Metallurgy and Materials Science, University of Birmingham, Birmingham 15).

PATTERN Recognition, July 29-31, National Physical Laboratory, Teddington (The Conference Department, Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, London WC2).

ERRATUM. In the article "Histochemical and Biochemical Study of Synaptic Lysosomes" by Mildred K. Gordon *et al.* (*Nature*, 217, 523; 1968) the name of one of the authors, Klaus G. Bensch, was misspelt.

ERRATUM. The address of Dr R. Spitzer, the author of the communication "Possible Explanation of Anomalies in Neutral K Phenomena" (*Nature*, 217, 943; 1968), should be Lawrence Radiation Laboratory, Livermore, California.

ERRATUM. In the introduction to the article "Urinary Metabolites in Parkinson's Disease" by Frederick A. Kuehl, jun., *et al.* (*Nature*, 217, 136; 1968), the word tryptamine should read tryptophan.

ERRATUM. In the communication "Effect of Cocaine, Desipramine and Angiotensin on Uptake of Noradrenaline in Tissues of Pithed Rats" by D. T. Pals and F. D. Masucci (*Nature*, 217, 772; 1968), the second sentence of the fourth paragraph should read: "The variation of radioactivity recoverable was probably a result of the presence of different numbers of sympathetic nerve endings in these tissues". In the final paragraph the words facilitated and facilitation should read potentiated and potentiation, respectively.

**CORRESPONDENCE****The Magic of Numbers**

SIR,—In your leading article of March 2 (*Nature*, 217, 793; 1968) you surmise that the 87.5 per cent of all scientists who, according to the "First Law of Research on Research", have ever been alive are alive now would be a ratio which would also probably have been valid in 450 BC. In fact, if this law is true at all this ratio can be shown to have been valid almost always.

Assume that the number of scientists increases by a ratio  $q$  ( $> 1$ ) per decade. Then  $n$  decades after the first scientist, say Archimedes, there will therefore be  $q^n$  scientists alive. The total number of scientists who have ever lived will be  $(q^n - 1)/(q - 1)$ . The ratio of those living in the  $n$ th decade to those who have ever lived will be  $q^n(q - 1)/(q^n - 1)$ . When  $n$  is large enough, say several tens of decades ( $q$  not being too near to 1), this ratio becomes equal to  $(q - 1)$  and is no longer dependent on  $n$ .

If  $q - 1 = 0.875$ , this would mean that scientists increase by a factor of 1.875 per decade. But why per decade? Or better, which is the right unit of time to choose?

Yours faithfully,

K. SCHILLER

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