cant. They may simply arise from the details of the computational procedure. Our results show, however, that the potential energy surface for the DCB crystal has a number of minima of almost equal depths. This is probably the main reason why the phase transitions in this crystal are so sluggish [there is a marked tendency to supercooling and superheating in this series; the phase transformation is usually initiated at defective sites in the crystal and it cannot be induced, even by mechanical coercion, in highly perfect crystals (Kitaigorodsky, Mnyukh & Asadov, 1965; Ghelfenstein & Szwarc, 1971; Reynolds, Kjems & White, 1972; Wheeler & Colson, 1975; Reynolds, 1977)]. The real crystal structure of each polymorph corresponds to the minimum of its free energy. In the absence of significant differences in the potential energies the relative stabilities of the three phases become essentially functions of the lattice dynamics.

The probability of phase transformation depends on the height of the free-energy barrier between the relevant phases. The potential-energy contribution to this barrier can be calculated with the above force field provided a molecular model of the transformation process is built (see, for example, Reynolds, 1977). It would also be of interest to use the same potential functions for studying the possibility of orientational disordering in the α and β phases suggested by X-ray data (Wheeler & Colson, 1975), which may be related to the mechanism of the phase transformation. A technique can be applied here similar to that developed for the case of orientational disorder in *trans*-stilbene (Bernstein & Mirsky, 1978).

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About sequences of maximal subgroups, a few answers to a question from Bertaut: erratum.

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In Billiet [*Acta Cryst.* (1977), A**33**, 1007–1008] the printer has omitted line 17. The last sentence of the first paragraph should read: One knows, at the present time, no complete and definitive answer to this question, but may invoke some general elements which are likely to occur in the resolution of this problem.

All information is given in the abstract.

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