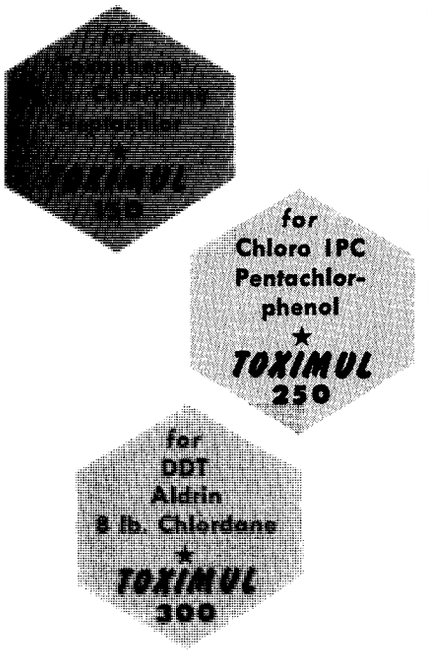

LETTERS

Speculation Declining

DEAR SIR:

You and the JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY are due my thanks and appreciation for the way you handled my article "Hypothesis and Progress" (Oct. 14 issue, page 925).

It is rather heartening to have several letters come in that have had quite an encouraging note in them. The enclosed copy of one of them I think is especially nice.

There is no doubt about it that your new journal is going to find a very useful place in our economy and to render a valuable service.

GEORGE D. SCARSETH
Director of Research
American Farm Research Association

DEAR DR. SCARSETH:

Your very stimulating discussion, "Hypothesis and Progress," in the JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY prompts me to write you. This is an idea which I have long felt was overlooked, much to the detriment of continuing research. It has become quite popular in the postwar years to thoroughly damn anyone who proposes an idea which is later proved incorrect or on a shaky foundation. The result has been a rapid decline in the amount of speculative thinking which is shared with other people. It used to be that when a research man had what might be a "nutty" idea he would at least discuss it informally with his colleagues. Today he keeps it strictly to himself.

Even the science meetings have become so drastically changed that I feel that they have lost much of their purpose. Today there are only discussions of completed work or generalized reviews of a broad field, usually done by some top authority in the field, a man or woman who, unfortunately, probably stopped creative thinking 25 years ago. I miss very much the reports of brave souls who used to stand up and make what really amounted to predictions. They stimulated my thinking more than any 10 science conferences of today's pattern. Do keep up your little crusade.

JOSEPH E. HOWLAND
Assistant to the Publisher
House Beautiful Magazine

Sugar from Maize

DEAR SIR:

In *Philosophical Magazine* (London), 3d. Ser. (1843), Vol. **22,** page 323, occurs an item which seems to me of great importance. The item is under the heading "On the Manufacture of Sugar from *Zea Maize.*"

It states that Prof. Henry Croft, in Indiana, made experiments which show that 1000 pounds of sugar may be made from an acre of maize stalks. The juice of maize stalks contains more than three times as much sugar as does the juice of beet root, and five times that of maple. By plucking off the ears of maize as they are beginning to form, the saccharine matter in the stalk is greatly increased. The maize stalk, he said, requires less pressure, and the whole stalk can be used afterwards, affording a good fodder for cattle. The plant, he pointed out, can be raised in a much shorter period than is required for cane and requires less attention than does the cane plant.

In my reading over many years I have never seen mention of the information contained in the above paragraph. One would assume that Professor Croft crystallized the sugar from corn stalks (deprived of ears) and that he showed that it is cane sugar. It would seem that this report should be further studied to determine its possible economic importance.

If any reader of the JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY knows whether Prof. Croft's study has been confirmed or refuted in the 110 years since he published his observations, the writer would like to learn the results.

E. V. MCCOLLUM
Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry
The Johns Hopkins University

Indisputable Statement

DEAR SIR:

I wish I could have written you prior to your publication of E. V. McCollum's article, "The Science of Nutrition is in the Forefront." It appears in the Sept. 30 issue of the JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY.

In that case I would have suggested that you enlarge the type and make the article occupy two or three pages rather than the one. Now my letter amounts to a mild criticism because you did not do something of the kind, although I admit lack of qualification to criticize the editing of such a journal. In my estimation Dr. McCollum presents an indisputable statement of the inestimable value of the developments in nutrition. I wish the article had been featured more prominently.

E. F. KOHMAN
Consultant
Campbell Soup Co.