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— *The Editor comments* —

DILUTING SCIENCE WITH POLITICS

We have become greatly disturbed in recent months by the increasing influence being exerted by political factors in what properly should be classified as strictly scientific considerations.

American ability in the field of science is recognized the world over, and no small part of the nation's more able and dedicated scientific personnel are affiliated with government agencies such as the Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Agriculture, National Bureau of Standards, and various others. Traditionally, the activities of these dedicated people have been of a noncontroversial nature and in fact have been the object of little, if any, fanfare. On the contrary, in the past, many commentators both outside and within government have been moved to decry that all too little notice or recognition has been accorded these scientists, their useful work, and often brilliant accomplishments.

Lately, however, a number of the more clever political tacticians have found that government scientific activities can provide a very fertile field from which they may derive much publicity, thereby drawing national attention and eventually swaying public opinion. Several such incidents, including the classic case of the 1962 drug amendments, attest to the success of maneuvers of this nature.

As noted above, this influence is most disturbing to us, because among other things, we regard such a climate as extremely unhealthy for the proper growth and further development of true science. The trend of the present environment is becoming less conducive to objective, unbiased decision-making on the part of our government scientists, and lends itself to unfortunate compromises on their part in drawing conclusions and taking actions which *should* be based entirely upon an accurate evaluation of the facts involved.

If the present movement is not soon checked, not only may our nation suffer from the immediate effects resulting from emotionally engendered legislation and enforcement, but even more seriously, it appears that the entire tenor of true objectivity within our scientific community might well be in jeopardy.

Edward G. Feldmann