

• Local Section News

North Central Section

The North Central Section and the Chicago Gas Chromatography Discussion Group were honored by having R. G. Ackman as our speaker for the January 20, 1971 meeting. This year and in the future we are going to hold at least one joint meeting with another society in the Chicago area.

Dr. Ackman was well qualified to speak before both groups since he is both a lipid chemist and a world famous gas chromatographer. Presently, Dr. Ackman is Assistant Director and Group Leader of Marine Lipids, at the Halifax Laboratory, Fisheries Research Board of Canada. He is also chairman of the Associate Committee on Fats and Oils of the National Council of Canada.

The speaker's talk was entitled "Isoprenoid Fatty Acids—An Exercise in Serendipity," the gift of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for. Having been analyzing fatty acids by gas chromatography from 1955, Dr. Ackman could provide a striking contrast between results formerly obtainable with packed columns and contemporary results with capillary (open-tubular) columns. Even the latter have their limitations, however, and the serendipity came about in an attempt to resolve the methyl ester of phytanic acid from methyl heptadecanoate on a

particular efficient column. This unexpectedly produced two peaks from the methyl phytanate. By another instance of serendipity the explanation for these two peaks as two diastereoisomers of this acid had been provided on an informal pre-publication basis only three months previously by another scientist. From this chance observation sprang a program which attempted to follow phytanic acid from its parent phytol, a component of chlorophyll, through the aquatic food web from plants to invertebrates, to fish, and even to whales.

Phytanic acid and two related acidic degradation products are almost inescapable components of the human diet. A review of work carried out in association with other laboratories explored the deposition of these acids in humans with the fortunately rare Refsum's syndrome, compared ruminant fats from north and south of the equator, and confirmed that the petroleum precursors in the famous Green River Shales of Wyoming had their origin in plants.

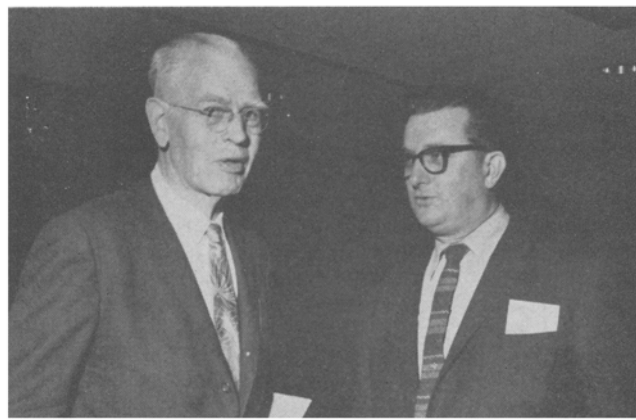
Our next meeting will be held March 17, 1971 at Josef's Restaurant in Hillside, Illinois. J. F. Mead, Professor at the Laboratory of Nuclear Medicine and Radiation Biology in Los Angeles will be presented with the 1971 Bailey Award. He will speak on "The Biogenesis of the Brain Fatty Acids."



Guest speaker
R. G. Ackman



J. Himes



Left to right, C. Lowry and G. Rinnac.



Left to right, E. S. Dereko, S. Chechakli, P. Bushong and J. Himes.



Left to right, J. Perry and S. Leslie.



Left to right, K. Udani, L. Goodman and M. Chan.



Left to right, G. Duraln, B. Szuhaj, L. Lachat, K. Fink, L. van Akkeren, A. A. Schmitz, Chu-nan Wang and M. Walters.