

INTRODUCTION

EPISTOLOGUE ON THE EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENT ON THE PROPERTIES OF CARBON BONDS

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With the steady growth of science it has become increasingly difficult for scientists to keep in touch with one another and to discuss their problems. This has led to what might be called the Conference Explosion, a proliferation of conferences, symposia, discussions, and meetings of all kinds. This has proved an inadequate solution for three reasons. First, it is difficult to collect all the leading workers in any field together at any one place and time. secondly, such meetings are very time-consuming, and thirdly, it is almost impossible to have a satisfactory discussion at a meeting where the participants have not seen the papers in advance and where there is often a large paying audience anxious to get its money's worth by pouncing on any ill-considered comment.

The last difficulty can be avoided by circulating preprints of the papers to the participants before the actual meeting is held; this is done with great effect by the Faraday Society, to take one example. The difficulty still remains, however, of bringing together all the people who should be there to discuss some specific branch of science.

Some years ago the Editorial Board of *Tetrahedron* introduced a series of "Paper Symposia", each consisting of a set of invited papers on some specific topic which were published together in one issue. When I was asked to organize such a symposium it occurred to me that it would be made much more valuable if the contributed papers were circulated to the participants so that points raised could be discussed and the discussion published. This we have now done; and we present here the first *Epistologue*, on the Effect of Environment on the Properties of Carbon Bonds. Since this is a new kind of publication, destined to reduce Conferences to their proper (and occasional) place, we felt it ought to have a new name. The term *Epistologue* (*ἐπιστολόγη* - λόγος) seemed appropriate, implying a discussion by correspondence. The idea could of course be extended. The papers could for example be circulated to others working in the same field who did not wish to contribute papers but had comments to make. Here there was not time to develop this possibility to any extent but Professor Mulliken has taken part on this basis.

The subject of the *Epistologue* is one of great topical interest and the papers and authors need no introduction. As the organizer I felt I should keep quiet.