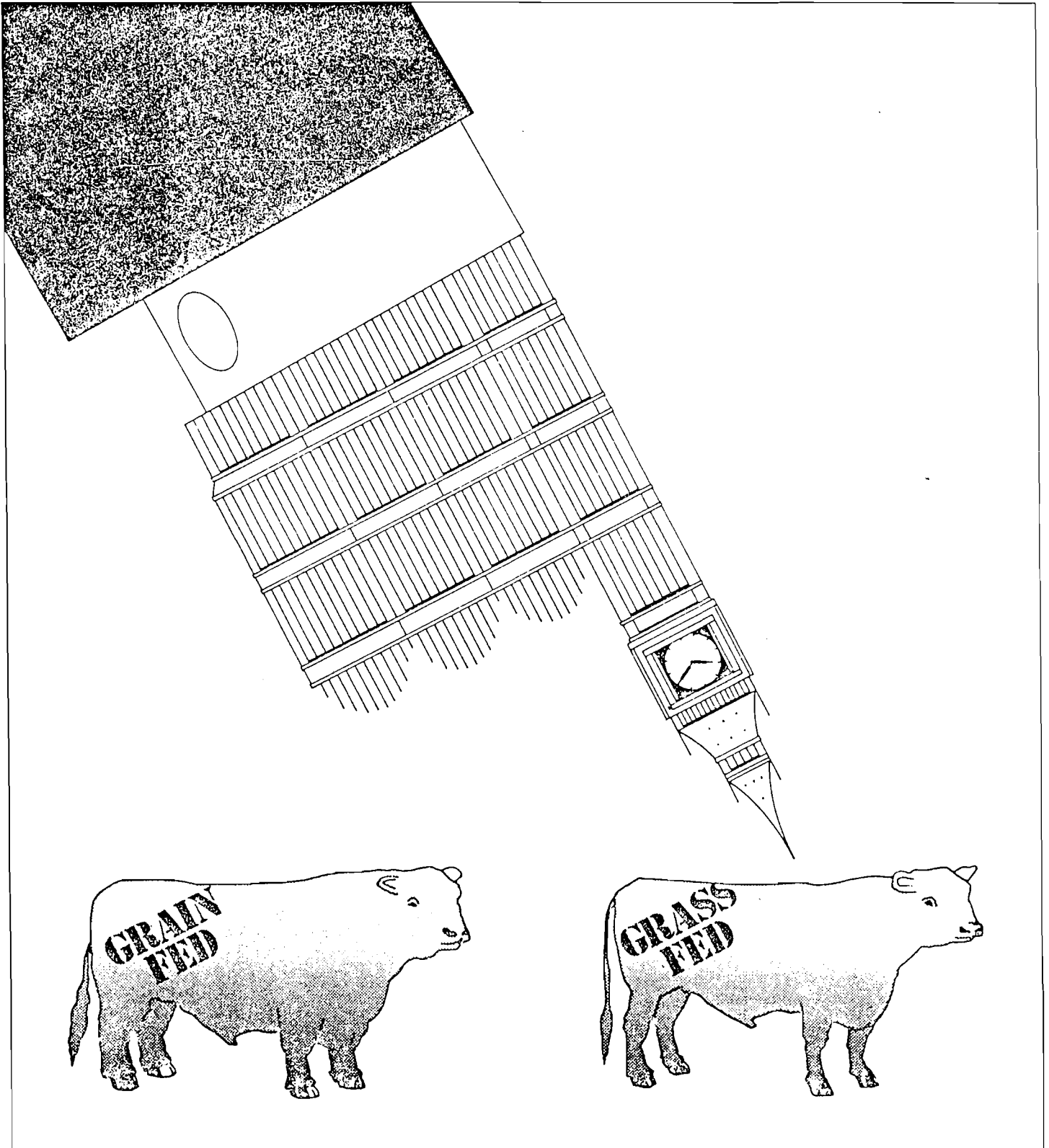


# newscientist



**Making the nation eat what's good for it**

# Letters

continued

perhaps 3000 items. Errors of a magnitude sufficient to account for Tam Dalyell's "major twist" are quite inexcusable and did not occur.

He will be telling us next that the bad weather is all the fault of those atom bombs.

As for metrication, anybody with a scientific background knows that the change is desirable even if the moment of change is uncomfortable. And, in this era of readily available slide rules and pocket calculators, nobody will be allowed to get away with a thing even if he wished to.

Why have we become such a nation of moaners? The Indians have decimalised their currency and adopted metric measures without turning a hair. Yet we indulge in an orgy of self pity over the hardships of the change.

*D. Ransome-Jones*

27 Lymham Road  
Luton, Beds

## Crowding

Sir.—Dr Hallon (Comment, 22 April, p 162) appears to have accepted at face value the DOE statement that Connecticut has a higher population density than this country.

This is true for the UK as a whole, but very misleading. According to the figures given in *Whittaker's Almanack* (1975), Connecticut has 605 people/sq mile to the UK's 597. However, the corresponding density for England is 915 (Wales 512, Scotland 175, N Ireland 293) and this puts a very different complexion on the room for increase in car ownership.

*Peter G. Embrey*

19 Edith Road  
Barons Court, London W15

## CROKEY

A new indoor Board Game for two or four players based on CROQUET.

A CROKEY Board is a checkerboard laid out like a Croquet Lawn, with hoops, clips, and a Centre Peg. Counters which represent balls, are moved in a Chess-like manner. As in Chess, the permitted moves are simple but the situations which can arise from them are limitless, and a CROKEY game can be played at all levels of skill.

A CROKEY Board really is a board: 47 x 38cm and weight 2Kg, supplied in teak-finish veneer.

Send SAE for fully descriptive leaflet showing typical CROKEY situations. £5.95 post free.

TACTICAL GAMES  
19 Northwood, ELY, CAMBS

## Railway figures

Sir.—In your report (Technology, 1 April, p 19) of the meeting at the Institution of Civil Engineers held on 22 March you wrote "... Smith's revelation last week that his costings were based on data produced by the Railway Conversion League..." This statement is untrue. Hall and Smith's costings are, as clearly stated in their report, based on 1973 unit costs. Figures published by the Railway Conversion League are given in our report *Conversion of Railways into Roads in the UK 1970* and are actual costs of conversion schemes carried out.

Our figures relate to the late 1960s. Hall and Smith's to 1973 and some high figures quoted at the meeting to estimates for work to be carried out in 1976 or later. Your correspondent is surely aware that in an inflationary age direct comparisons of cost figures over such a period are meaningless. Norfolk reported a figure of £52 000/km for a 9 km scheme completed in 1969; we have therefore a difference by a factor of four in the figures from one country over this period.

*Anaus Dalgleish*

Railway Conversion League

1st  
Slouson Hill  
Chertsey  
Surrey

## Random questions

Sir.—Your brief piece, "Random Questions", (Feedback, 11 March, p 565) communicates the "now" (to your Buckinghamshire reader) discovery that ordinary dice do not show equiprobability for each face coming up, and so implies that classical statistical tests, which assume such equiprobability, are invalid when applied to testing for psychokinetic (PK) abilities in parapsychological research.

Lest any readers be misled, they should know that the problem of biased dice was taken up and solved over 40 years ago by J. B. Rhine and his co-workers.

At first specially machined, balanced dice were developed to approximate equiprobability in control throws, but a much simpler solution was quickly found and has been standard ever since.

Before an experiment

## Tantalizer

### No. 448 Love and hate

To play this vaguely suggestive game you will need nine cards printed with the words LOVE AND HATE FEY GUY AGO TONY GUILT NLL. You and your opponent take it in turns to pick a word until one of you has collected three with a letter in common. Whoever does so first is the winner.

You lose the toss and your opponent snaps up LOVE. Assuming him to be a master at the game, what must you take to stop him winning?

*Martin Hollis*

### Solution to Tantalizer No 447

#### Marching Order

28 Writing monks with capitals and rooms with small, move Lm (i.e. L to m), Kl, Ik, Ilj, Fi, Eh, Cf, Be, Ad, Ba, Cb, Ag, Ed, Fe, He, Aj, Ig, Kf, Lh, Am, Jl, Kk, Ji, Ih, Ff, Ee, Cc, Bb.

begins, a schedule of target faces is set up which not only fixes the total, but calls for a frequent and regular alternation of which face is to be the target. For example, one's might be the target for the first dozen trials, two's for the second dozen, etc. One need only use dice which show rough approximations to equiprobability then, for any biases work against you as much as they work for you, and so balance out.

*Charles T. Tart*

Department of Psychology  
University of California  
Davis

## Feeding babies

Sir.—I read appreciatively Dr Watts's recent article on the work of Professor Joaquin Cravioto on malnutrition (In Person, Vol 69, p 588). The impact of his careful underlining of the fact that Cuba was one of only three pre-industrial countries to have eliminated malnutrition was, however, spoilt for me by reading at the same time a report that Cuba was to receive \$310 000 from the World Food Programme for feeding babies, children and expectant and nursing mothers. (World Food Programme News Jan-March 1975, p 3.)

*F. C. Young*

Research on the control of  
olive pests and diseases,  
P.O. Box 6  
Kifissia  
Athens

## Harwell programmes

Sir.—In reply to the comment by Dr K. Hoselitz (Letters, 15 April, p 152), Harwell's R & D effort is categorised as

follows:—

1. direct support for the British nuclear power programme; 2. underlying research in nuclear science (longer-term work); 3. work under contract to government departments, research councils and local authorities; 4. nuclear and non-nuclear work for industrial companies.

Fewer than 650 qualified scientists and engineers (QSEs) are engaged on the nuclear programmes (1 and 2) supported by the nuclear energy vote. The other 500 QSEs are involved in contract R & D and other work (3 and 4) outside the nuclear energy vote.

Programme 5 involves working both as agent and contractor to government departments and is funded mainly by the Departments of Industry, Energy, Environment and Defence and the Science Research Council on the customer-contractor principles enunciated in the Rothschild report.

Harwell's industrial R & D programmes (4), which earned £1 400 000 in 1975-76, cover a wide range of contract research for British companies, large and small, and for the nationalised industries, and the development and exploitation of Harwell's inventions.

*L. E. J. Roberts*

AERE  
Harwell  
Oxfordshire OX11 0RA

## Correction

In the item, "Less pollution from toxic wastes in South Wales" (This Week, 8 April, p 60) the figure 0.5 ppm of PCB should have read 0.5 ppb of PCB. The error is regretted.