

methods in use, as it exerts a selection pressure in a different direction, operates on different types of individuals. As each intervention has no repetitive aspect, it becomes a new selective factor, with a catastrophic aspect for a population which has not been prepared by previous selections to bear it. Now Watt<sup>38</sup> considers that the more the ecosystem where a population lives, corresponds to a predictable environment, the more that population has acquired a genetic rigidity, and the more subject it can be to extermination by a catastrophic factors. It is in this way that climatic events can have a decisive effect on populations, provided that they have no repetitive aspect. That shows the scholastic aspect of the dispute on the relative importance of biotic or abiotic factors<sup>42</sup>.

The catastrophic effects of interventions of various kinds can thus eradicate progressively a whole population. Thus we can expect total eradication of a harmful population, but such a result could not be permanent. In effect, every agrosystem, often far more than many ecosystems, is an

open system. It can always be recolonized. Keeping empty niches in it requires permanent action. But the price paid for any success is a consequent carelessness. As an ecosystem with unoccupied niches is permanently unbalanced, only permanent action prevents attacks for the occupation of available niches.

Therefore, *there exists neither permanent solution, nor hierarchy in the value of strategies, nor ideal recipe, nor all-purpose produce*. All discussions on the research for an ideal technique look very much like the discovery of the philosopher's stone.

The fact that some people may have such aims a century after Darwin and Haeckel shows that mechanism and fixism have still left deep impressions.

<sup>42</sup> V. Labeyrie, in: *Statistical ecology*, vol. 2. Ed. G. P. Patil. Pennsylvania State University Press 1971.

## CONGRESSUS

### Switzerland

#### International symposium on gut hormones

*Lausanne, 18–19 June 1977*

To mark the 75th anniversary of the discovery of the first 'hormone' by Bayliss and Starling, an international symposium sponsored by the Widmar foundation will review the whole field of gastrointestinal hormones.

Each hormone will be covered in depth and the wider clinical and scientific implications discussed in eight intensive sessions. *Topics*: Chemistry, Evolution (developmental), Techniques, Secretin, Motilin, CCK, Pancreatic Polypeptide, GIP, Gastrin, Glucagon, Paracrine-Neurotransmitter system, VIP, Somatostatin, Neurotensin-Bombesin-Sub P-Endorphins, Duodenal Ulcer, Endocrine Tumours.

Organizing Committee: S. R. Bloom, P. Magnenat, J. M. Polak and J.-P. Felber.

Further information by Dr S. R. Bloom, Department of Medicine, Hammersmith Hospital, Du cane Road, London W12 0HS, England.

### Italy

#### EUChem Conference on Structure, Synthesis and Biosynthesis of Mono- and Sesquiterpenoids

*in Varenna (Lake Como), 25–31 August 1977*

About 12 plenary lectures will be given by invited speakers and a limited number of short communications will be accepted from the participants. Further information by: Conference on Mono- and Sesquiterpenoids, Laboratorio di Chimica Organica dell'Università, via C. Saldini 50, I-20133 Milano, Italia.

### France

#### 17th International Congress of Physiological Sciences

*in Paris, 18–23 July 1977*

The first two days will be devoted to general lectures and during the last four days specialized meetings will take place. Further information can be obtained from the National Physiological Society of each country or by writing to the Congress Secretary: Prof. J. Scheerer, Secrétariat du 17. Congrès Int. des Sciences Physiologiques, U. E. R. Pitié-Salpêtrière, Cedex 1300, F-75300 Paris-Brune, France.

### The Netherlands

#### The 7th European Food Symposium on product and process selection in the food industry

*at Eindhoven, 21–23 September 1977*

The symposium will be organized by the Food Working Party of the European Federation of Chemical Engineering in cooperation with the Dutch Society of Nutrition Science and Food Technology and IUFOST. *Topics*: 1. Food industry and society; 2. Product and process selection: procedures and techniques; 3. Examples of product selection based on economic considerations; 4. Examples of process selection based on economic considerations. Further informations by the Food Working Party, c/o Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, P.O. Box 90 04 40, D-6000 Frankfurt 90, Federal Republic of Germany.