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Apology to Rhine and Soal

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One aspect of the usefulness of the national register is not mentioned in Gillette's account of its discontinuation. In contrast to an ad hoc survey of a particular field, all respondents to the register were required to declare what they considered to be their field of greatest scientific specialization or competence. In this way the "bandwagon" aspect was avoided that is so frequently associated with ad hoc surveys, and which often results in the overstatement of the degree of professional commitment to a particular field at a given time.

For this reason, despite the register's shortcomings, there was little reason to suspect it of bias. Useful conclusions concerning manpower trends over a decade could be drawn from the register's figures with a much greater degree of assurance than from two ad hoc surveys made 8 to 10 years apart.

Particularly in interdisciplinary fields, ad hoc surveys can lead to erroneous conclusions about actual manpower. It is possible for an individual who described himself to the register as a chemical oceanographer to appear simultaneously on survey lists of "nutritionists" (through an interest in marine amino acids), "atmospheric scientists" (through an interest in air-sea material exchanges), and "public health workers," (through a faculty appointment in a department of a school of public health). The choices available in the register were carefully designed so that such side issues were identified, but the respondent was placed firmly in the field of his maximum professional competence.

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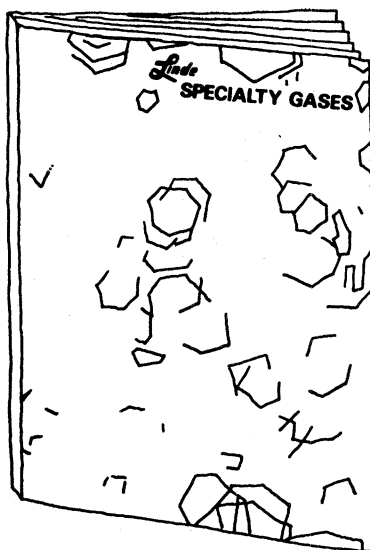
#### Apology to Rhine and Soal

During the past year I have had some correspondence with J. B. Rhine which has convinced me that I was highly unfair to him in what I said in an article entitled "Science and the supernatural" published in *Science* in 1955 (26 Aug., p. 359). The article discussed possible fraud in extrasensory perception experiments. I suspect that I was similarly unfair in what I said about S. G. Soal in that paper.

GEORGE R. PRICE  
*1A Little Titchfield Street,  
 London, W1P 7FG, England*

28 JANUARY 1972

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