

## Introduction to the Symposium on Chemical Information Activities Abroad\*

Stephen J. Tauber  
Informatics Inc., 6000 Executive Blvd., Rockville, Md. 20852

Received October 27, 1972

American chemists, especially those who frequent the meetings of the Division of Chemical Literature or otherwise participate in the invisible college of information technology, have ample opportunity to keep up with what is happening in the handling of chemical information within the United States. We are generally aware of the most important work abroad and are influenced by it. However we have little exposure to the institutions which the various scientifically active countries have adopted for access to and dissemination of chemical information.

The purpose of this symposium was to present to an American audience national chemical information establishments abroad as viewed by those who are active in assuring their success or who are otherwise especially knowledgeable. The specific collection of countries is only a sampler; we do not pretend to a complete survey. Indeed, omission of chemically significant countries such as Germany, the Soviet Union, Israel, Switzerland, and all of Scandinavia, not to mention three entire continents, leaves more potential material for a subsequent symposium than has been included in this one. Nevertheless, the present symposium spans three continents and a variety of national approaches.

Significant to the Canadian situation are technical ad-

vancement, including a sizeable chemical industry and several centers of academic chemistry, a federal system of government, and wide geographic dispersion. There the chief Federal scientific research organization disseminates and gives direct access to chemical and other scientific information. From France there is a description of a very formally structured organization within a governmental ministry, with different parts of the organization responsible for information in distinct branches of science and technology. Both the overarching policy and some specific techniques of the chemical sector are described. In the United Kingdom, the large number of academic departments is significant to the chemistry scene. In chemical industry a key characteristic is the bimodal distribution of company sizes. The role is described of a chemical information service originated by a professional society, operated by a university, and extensively funded by the government. The Roumanian science and science information situation is discussed, by a scientific Balkans-watcher, in the context of culture, politics, national pride, and lines of communication. The contribution from Japan emphasizes chemical publication. There are (from an American point of view) a bewildering number of chemical societies, each with its own set of publications.

Each author shows a national facet of the worldwide scientific establishment. The composite of papers demonstrates the influence of distinct national matrices on what constitutes suitable means for the dissemination of chemical information.

\* Presented at the 164th National Meeting, American Chemical Society, New York, August 27-September 1, 1972.