THE EDITORS' COLUMN

THE ANALYTICAL CHEMIST, more than any other scientist, is concerned with precise measurements and careful calibrations. Because of this he should constantly question, examine, and re-evaluate the preciseness of his measurements and the purity of materials with which he works. In addition, because of the ever-increasing sophistication of analytical methods, standard reference materials should be placed under special scrutiny, and it should be realized that the reagent which was considered "pure" a few years ago might even be considered impure by today's standards. It is important, therefore, to bring the needs and problems of the analytical chemist to the attention of the scientific community as a whole.

The Committee on Analytical Chemistry of the Division of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council, has seen the need for a general program for the evaluation of reference materials that are used by analytical chemists, and it has established a new subcommittee which will deal with all aspects of the program.

The subcommittee is chaired by J. C. White of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and is composed of the following members: M. D. Cooper, General Motors Corp.; Henry Fischback, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; Charles Merritt, Jr., U.S. Army Natick Laboratories; G. H. Morrison, Cornell University; Arba Thomas, Armco Steel Corp.; S. M. Tuthill, Malinckrodt Chemical Works, and Samuel Vigo, U.S. Army Materials Research Agency.

The work of the subcommittee will be primarily concerned with the following materials: (1) primary standard substances used in chemical analyses, (2) pure substances as reference standards for instrumental methods of analysis, and (3) samples of certified known composition for calibration and standardization of analytical methods.

One of the first actions of the new subcommittee will be to obtain specific and generalized comments from selected analytical chemists by means of a questionnaire. Those questioned will, among other things, be asked to rate (for applications in a variety of analytical techniques) the reference materials they are now using, without regard to the sources from which they were obtained, for availability, accuracy, and cost. The information will be used to compile a status report that should be beneficial to research investigators, analytical laboratory supervisors, and manufacturers and suppliers of reference materials.

NEW ISOTOPES INFORMATION CENTER

The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission has announced the establishment of an Isotopes Information Center at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory; it will be part of the Isotopes Development Center, which was established in 1962.

More than 5000 documents have been acquired, and the center exchanges information with such groups as the International Atomic Energy Agency, Eurisotop, and the Japan Radioisotope Association. In addition to continued publication of *Isotopes and Radiation Technology Quarterly,* state-of-the-art reviews, reports, and translations will be published, and general and technical requests for information will be answered. Requests for information should be addressed to:

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