repeated by those who favour abortion on demand. The fact that untruth is repeated again and again does not turn it into truth, but unfortunately it deceives many people who do not know the facts.

Parliament went out of its way to avoid the situation Mr Walley describes by inserting a conscience clause. At no stage of the debate was there any suggestion that this clause was only to apply to the present holders of jobs, and had there been any such suggestion it is extremely unlikely that the bill would ever have been passed.

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Danger of instant adhesives

SIR,—Dr W G C Strawbridge (5 June, p 1305) expresses his concern that adhesion of the human skin to itself by cyanoacrylate adhesive could be parted only by surgical intervention. In fact surgery is never required. Although tensile strength is very high, the peel strength of these adhesives is low enough to permit peeling or "rolling" apart any such bonded tissue.

A similar concern for consumer safety was raised in the United States by the Consumers Union in 1973. In response to a letter from this union the Consumer Product Safety Commission began an investigation into the safety aspects of cyanoacrylate adhesives. On 27 February 1974 the commission held a hearing "to obtain information and views on safety aspects of cyanoacrylate adhesives, particularly the characteristic of this product to almost instantaneously bond skin to skin." I quote: "As a result of these hearings, investigation by the Commission staff, laboratory data and literature relating to the safety and use of cyanoacrylate adhesives the Commission concludes that, at this time, the consumer is not subject to an unreasonable risk of injury from the fast bonding characteristics of cyanoacrylate adhesives. In the event that a consumer accidentally (or intentionally) bonds skin to skin, simple procedures such as peeling (rolling) apart the bonded parts rather than pulling apart with a direct opposing action will provide relief." Warm water will aid separation, after which a warm soap and water wash will remove residual adhesive from the skin.

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Pancreatic pain

SIR,—Your leading article (17 April, p 921) on this subject requires comment.

The use of morphine and its immediate derivatives in acute pancreatitis is contraindicated as there is considerable evidence that these drugs raise the opening pressure of the sphincter of Oddi.¹⁻⁴ This is clearly detrimental as it interferes with drainage through the pancreatic duct and will further encourage the retrograde entry of pancreatic juice into the pancreatic parenchyma and lymphatics. Pentazocine has a considerably lesser effect on the sphincter and is to be preferred in this situation.

After treating patients with acute pancreatitis, a very common condition in New York, for many years⁵ I have become impressed how

rapidly the pain of acute pancreatitis disappears after effective nasogastric suction has been started. The need for narcotics in our patients is therefore not very great and we have managed satisfactorily with pentazocine and pethidine.

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Eggs and hypercholesterolaemia

SIR,—Dr H P Rhomberg and Professor H Braunsteiner (15 May, p 1188) report a case of hypercholesterolaemia due to excessive intake of cholesterol resulting from eating 8-12 eggs a day for 3½ years. Earlier investigations¹ into coronary heart disease and egg consumption have shown a relation between the two. Egg yolk has been used experimentally to investigate the relationship between dietary cholesterol and serum cholesterol levels.

Eggs are the richest source of cholesterol in the diet but are also the richest source of vitamin D, containing about 8.75 µg (350 IU) each. There is some evidence that vitamin D in excess raises the serum cholesterol level^{2,3} and that there may be a significant relationship between daily intake of vitamin D and the incidence of myocardial infarction.⁴ In the reported case of hypercholesterolaemia the daily intake of more than 100 µg of vitamin D (8-12 eggs + 1 l of fortified milk) may have been likely to produce a predominant part of the rise in serum cholesterol, which to a lesser degree may have resulted from the intake of high doses of cholesterol.

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Dangers of domestic pets

SIR,—Although your leading article about the human diseases caused by domestic pets (19 June, p 1486) maintains that "undoubtedly the most common" health problem caused by dogs is toxocarasis, it fails to specify the size of the problem posed by either this or the other infections mentioned. The case for imposing stricter controls on pets is seriously weakened by the lack of hard data about the morbidity that can be attributed to them. Statements such as "a substantial proportion of infected persons develop respiratory and other complications [of toxocarasis]" are regrettably vague, and in itself the fact that "6% of apparently healthy persons have evidence of past infection" is little cause for concern if the individual's health has not in fact been affected.

We need more precise information about the effect these infections have on human health before it is justifiable for the medical profession to attempt to persuade the com-

munity to exert greater control over its pets and where they deposit their excreta.

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SIR,—Your leading article "Why do we let dogs foul our streets?" (19 June, p 1486) might be dismissed as just another blast from the vociferous anti-dog lobby, especially since most practising doctors will have seen nothing more by way of problems than the occasional nip from a dog, and that frequently provoked. Nevertheless, dog-lovers and dog-breeders like myself are to the fore in moves to improve hygiene and are as resentful as anyone, perhaps even more than most, when dogs are permitted to roam free and foul public places.

The rabies problem is certainly a case for grave concern and every step is to be encouraged which leads to prevention of illegal importation to the UK. Heavy fines and the threat of imprisonment may deter, but the certainty that a smuggled animal would be destroyed might prove an added deterrent.

That big dogs may be more of a health hazard than small dogs is a matter that you would probably find difficult to prove. It may be that the increased popularity of big dogs, especially pedigree dogs, is likely to result in better husbandry since responsible breeders go to great lengths to eliminate pests such as *Toxocara canis* from their kennels.

What is needed is greater control over the population of domestic pets. Licensing, as you note, does not begin to effect control. What is needed is a means of ensuring that unwanted litters are not born—birth control for dogs. Attempts to set up clinics for surgical castration and spaying have not been especially successful, partly because of the extent of the problem and partly because they tend to attract the best-motivated pet-owners. One possible solution is to promote the development of a "vaccine" to effect castration or spaying. That this is possible has been shown by work published from this department.^{1,2} Developed further, this could be made available quite cheaply and might be linked to an increased licence fee for unneutered animals, neutered animals being exempt.

Finally, one might take issue with your statement that "developed communities have long been conscious of the need for high standards of hygiene for human excreta." In so many instances disposal is simply by pouring untreated material into rivers and estuaries to be returned with the tide. Things have a long way to go before we can be satisfied on this account.

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Coagulation studies in patients treated with bromocriptine

SIR,—A significant shortening of the bleeding time in mice treated with bromocriptine has been reported by Karmali and Horrobin.¹ Bromocriptine is widely used in treating galactorrhoea/amenorrhoea syndromes² and acromegaly³ and for the suppression of puer-