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Editorial Office: Wexham Springs, Slough SL3 6PL Telephone: Fulmer 2727 · Telex: 848352 Advicret Slough

Editorial comment

THE LIST OF THE PAPERS published in the first twenty-five volumes of *MCR* which was printed at the end of *MCR* 85 inevitably prompts consideration of the subjects covered in the past and of others that might be covered in the future. One thought that quickly presents itself is what all the basic research reported over this length of time has led to: is it possible to assess and report the behaviour of concrete in real buildings and other structures with an eye as critical as that that is regularly focused upon small, even microscopic, specimens? There have been welcome signs in the last year or so that this is happening. In *MCR* 80, a paper by Kokubu reported the deflections in service of five prestressed concrete bridges (built from 1964 to 1967) in Japan; in *MCR* 82, Carmichael and Hornby reported the strain behaviour of concrete in prestressed concrete pressure vessels over a period of eight years.

As these two examples at once suggest, research of this nature is bound to take a matter of years to complete. The important point is, however, that a serious attempt is made either to compare a series of similar structures, noting the relevant variables, or to observe by careful instrumentation the behaviour of a prototype and relate this to the behaviour which calculation or model tests have suggested could be expected. Like any other useful type of research, this sort of study may, indeed probably will, have its origin in a particular instance but, again like any other useful research, it needs to be well thought out before being carried out. The Board will be glad to consider further serious studies of this kind for publication.

What one might perhaps call an interim result of a great deal of research is the production of codes of practice, of which in recent years in the United Kingdom, CP 110, the Unified Code, is, shall we say, the most famous. After so many years of labour by so many distinguished contributors, and dignified by a capital letter, the Code might be thought to be definitive. But it is only the interim result of sifting and arranging the collective wisdom of the industry up to a given time. Experience continues to accumulate and, clearly, designers putting the Code into practice will come across specific problems, associated perhaps with aspects of detailing, and the solution of these problems will lead to developments in the design process. Also research workers will no doubt be studying such problems and amplifying the recommendations of the Code by further testing. The Board would welcome contributions on developments and investigations of this kind which might be categorized as research and development directly related to the design process and directly associated with design economy.

The word development, so often linked arm-in-arm to research by an ampersand, is generally looked upon as the poor relation. Very often there is some justification for this, but there need not be. Development, too, can and should be planned in a scientific manner: a problem should be recognized, aims clarified, variables selected, tests carried out, comparisons made and conclusions reached. If the work is reported in a similar manner, papers on subjects of this kind will also be willingly considered by the Board.