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JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY

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COMMENTS OF REFEREE III

AUTHOR: Whitlock, Harold W U/Wis. Chemistry

TITLE: Chemsyn: Comm. Ed.: A Chemical Automaton (2484)

X

yes

COMMENTS:

This paper is so brief that it has to be accepted as little more than an announcement of some interesting progress. I can sympathize with the author's dilemma that the JACS probably would not accept a ms. on this subject that exposes enough detail for a critical analysis of the mechanization of its logic. In the circumstances, a condition for publication ought to be the addition of a statement that more detailed accounts are available as technical reports or informal papers that can be obtained on application by interested readers.

While the ms. was in my hands, the extensive account by Corey and Wipke appeared in Science (Oct. 10) and the paper probably would profit from the inclusion of some comparative discussion. It probably would also be illuminating to compare the "fgp"s defined here with the "functional groups" of Ref. 1. (The recurve objective, recursive definition is interesting, and the author should have no difficulty in dealing with this. It is also just as "bad" as he points out too.)

In view of the limitations modestly but correctly pointed out by the author on ms. p. 6, one might question whether the contribution is so urgent as to demand acceptance as a "communication to theeditor." Perhaps the Corey-Wipke paper answers that.

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The above sounds too critical. This is an important field of investigation, for which there are few good avenues of publication that can reach the appropriate audience. The JACS should encourage the exposition of this kind of progress, precisely because the first steps are rather feeble and poorly connected. In future, however, editors may well ask authors to justify why (when and if) programs are re-developed from scratch rather than built on concepts published in JACS and equally accessibleliterature. This is not to suggest that the present contribution would fail by that criterion.