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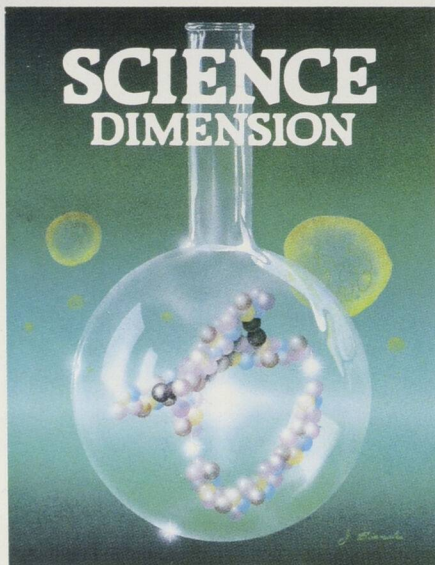
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There was a time when only the human pancreas could produce a molecule of the protein proinsulin, the precursor to the hormone insulin. Now, all that has changed, thanks to a combination of chemistry and genetically engineered bacteria. Canadian scientists are on the verge of producing this molecule with the same ease as they make beer, and it's a simple enzymic step to convert the precursor to the active hormone. Getting to this stage might not have been easy but it was exciting, as the story on page 18 attests.

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