CHEMICAL COMMUNICATIONS

## **Enamines from Allenes**

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THE reactions of enamines<sup>1</sup> have come into prominence in recent years, particularly the alkylation reactions developed by Stork. While enamines derived from cyclic ketones are readily available few simple enamines derived from aliphatic ketones have been described in the literature. We here report the formation of enamines by addition of amines to 1-cyanoallenes, general methods for the preparation of which have recently been described.<sup>2</sup> The addition of amines to 1-cyanoallenes results in a fast exothermic reaction which is virtually completed after a few minutes when allenes with small alkyl substituents are used but may require some heating where large alkyl substituents are present. Enamines are usually obtained in 80-90% yield. Addition may take place at the 1,2- or 2,3-double bond and this can to some extent be regulated by choice of the amine used in the reaction. Diethylamine gives mainly 1,2-addition whereas piperidine affords mostly the 2,3-addition product. Both types of enamine are stable under the reaction conditions employed and do not isomerise. They are therefore formed by different mechanistic pathways which may be formulated as in the reaction Scheme. quantitatively to the same  $\beta$ -keto-nitrile<sup>3</sup> (C) and this constitutes a new method of synthesis of  $\beta$ -keto-nitriles. 1-Cyanoalk-2-en-2-amines (A) show  $\nu_{max}$  2250—2280 (CN), 1650—1670 cm.<sup>-1</sup> (C=C) and  $\lambda_{max}$  203—204 m $\mu$  ( $\epsilon$ , 6000)



A 90° rotation round the C-1–C-2 bond is necessary before delocalisation of the anion can occur and (B) can be formed. The detailed mechanistic implications of this reaction will be discussed elsewhere.  $\lambda_{\text{shoulder}} 232$ —244m $\mu$  ( $\epsilon$ , 1000) whereas 1-cyanoalk-1-en-2-amines (B) show  $\nu_{\text{max}} 2210$  (C=N), 1575— 1580 cm.<sup>-1</sup> (C=C),  $\lambda_{\text{max}} 275$ —285 m $\mu$  ( $\epsilon$ , 20,000). Further studies on the scope of these reactions and their applications are in progress.

Both types of enamine, (A) and (B), hydrolyse

TABLE Cyanide Amine Yield of A Yield of B R1  $\mathbb{R}^2$ н Pri Et<sub>2</sub>NH 90% Me 75% Me Et<sub>2</sub>NH 78% 17% 81% \* Me Me [CH<sub>2</sub>]<sub>5</sub>NH 8% Me Et Ēt₂NĦ 72%Me Εt [CH<sub>2</sub>]₅NH 8%  $\mathbf{Et}$ Et Et<sub>2</sub>NH 70%66% [CH<sub>2</sub>]₅NH Et<sub>2</sub>NH Εt Εt Me But 43% 23% 58% Me But [CH<sub>2</sub>]<sub>5</sub>NH Pr Pri 54% Et<sub>2</sub>NH 16%

\* Not isolated pure

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<sup>1</sup> J. Szmuszkovicz, Adv. Org. Chem., 1963, 4, 1.

<sup>2</sup> P. M. Greaves, S. R. Landor, and D. R. J. Laws, Chem. Comm., 1965, 321.

<sup>3</sup>  $\beta$ -Keto-nitriles have previously been prepared by Claisen ester type of condensation of nitriles having reactive amethylene groups and either esters (J. B. Dorsch and S. M. McElvain *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1932, **54**, 2960 and subsequent papers) or nitriles (e.g., A. Dornow, I. Kulilcke, and F. Baxmann, *Chem. Ber.*, 1949, **82**, 254.) See also 2-cyanoalkanones prepared from enamines (M. E. Kuehne, *J. Amer. Chem. Soc.*, 1959, **81**, 5400.