

## Comments and Communications

### Research Publication: An Addendum

Several important facts concerning publication in the field of physics have been brought to my attention since the appearance in *Science*, August 26, of the article "Research Publication: A Federal Responsibility?" In the belief that this additional information will be of interest to *Science* readers and that it is important to a fuller understanding of the publication situation in this leading scientific field, this brief addendum is made.

*Physical Review.* The publishers of the *Physical Review* have indicated that its situation is not as extreme as that of the *Journal of Chemical Physics*. They report that the *Physical Review* has at no time failed to publish promptly all creditable papers in the field of physics which are submitted and are proper to the journal. The accomplishment of this, to date, has been a matter of great pride to members of the American Physical Society. But it is also a great financial burden. The American Physical Society tells me that this undertaking is costing more than the society's current income can support. The society has met its publishing obligations for the past several years by using funds which it was able to accumulate during the war period. This year the *Physical Review* has managed, partly through outside aid, to keep abreast of the rising number of papers to be published. For 1950, drastic increases in dues and subscription prices have had to be decided upon without full certainty that even these will be sufficient.

*Nuclear Physics journal?* The suggestion made in the August 26 article that an adequate outlet in nuclear physics is not available has caused concern among the publishers of the *Physical Review*. They rightly feel that this would be too great a falling down on their responsibilities to be tolerated. Whether there should be a journal devoted exclusively to nuclear physics is a question that the managing editor of the American Physical Society and his advisers have had under consideration for some time. It is entirely possible that the step of dividing the *Physical Review* into a nuclear physics journal and a "rest of physics" journal will be taken. It is indeed understandable that there are many arguments against such a step and many for it. These have not yet been resolved. Meanwhile, the *Physical Review* should certainly be commended for having willingly accepted the great burden of providing an outlet for the increasing number of research papers in this and all other branches of physics.

The American Physical Society has excelled in an important task which must continue. That it needs help is apparent. That it is worthy of help is also apparent.

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I have read the article on research publication with decided interest and agree fully with the thesis that the

government, which is appropriating such large funds these days for research work, should look to the end of the process and also provide adequate funds for publishing the results. Otherwise the research funds are largely wasted and the desired results are not obtained.

In this department we are going counter to the trend recommended and are eliminating means of disseminating scientific information. Two years ago the *Experiment Station Record*, which carried to its many readers each month the results of agricultural and biological research throughout the world, had to be suspended after 95 volumes because of a shortage of funds. This year at the end of the fiscal year in June the *Journal of Agricultural Research*, started in 1913, had to be suspended for the same reason. This journal carried only technical scientific articles on fundamental biological and agricultural research done here in the department and at the state agricultural experiment stations. I have been editorially in charge of this journal the last 25 years and I naturally regret exceedingly that its publication will not be continued. We always tried to maintain it on a high scientific and editorial plane and our efforts have apparently borne fruit. We have received many commendatory letters from research workers in this and other countries on its high quality. These have made us feel that our work was appreciated but they only added to the regret we have in seeing the journal discontinued. But such instrumentalities for the dissemination of scientific information must have financial support if they are to accomplish their functions. I therefore think that Miss Jurgens is on the right track in indicating the responsibility of the government in attaining desired objectives.

As I see the picture, those authorized to handle government budgets and make appropriations for approved projects will sooner or later be forced to give more attention to official channels of scientific publication.

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### Catching Fishes with the Hand in India

On reading E. W. Gudger's article (*Amer. Naturalist*, 1948, 82, 281) "Catching Fishes with the Hand. I. In the Two Americas," and on learning from him that no records of this method of catching fishes in India have been found in the literature, I wish to narrate the following facts observed at widely separated places in India in the course of the last 32 years.

*Punjab.* During winter months at Lahore, Western Punjab, when the temperature falls almost to the freezing point, a catfish of the river Ravi, a fish locally known at *Khagga* (*Rita rita* Hamilton), seeks shelter among rocks and crevices at the bottom and goes into a semitorpid state. This fish possesses three very strong