



Resignation of the Editor

ON 15 October I asked the board of directors of the Association to be relieved of the editorship of *Science* and *The Scientific Monthly* as soon as a suitable successor could be found. Circumstances unforeseen at the time have made it desirable for me to terminate now, even though a permanent editor has not been appointed. On 1 February I am joining the technical staff of the Ramo-Wooldridge Corporation, Los Angeles. Dr. Dael Wolfe, the administrative secretary of the Association, has assumed charge of the periodicals, at least temporarily.

I accepted the editorship on 1 December 1953 on short notice and with a considerable adjustment in my plans, at a time when the two periodicals lacked both a full-time editor and a full-time assistant editor. I agreed to come in the belief that help was seriously needed and with the hope that there would be freedom and facilities to develop the periodicals along lines that eventually would serve to make them the most useful to readers in a day that nearly everyone will agree is far different from that of even a few years ago.

My surmise that help was sorely needed turned out to be correct. Moreover, there was gradual acquiescence to my insistence that facilities be expanded to permit the initiation of certain improvements as well as to continue others that had been envisaged by the board of directors and board of editors. For instance, the number of text pages in *Science* has been markedly increased, to 2037 pages in 1954. As a result, it has been possible to increase the variety of material published in each issue and to expand materially the sections devoted to news and notes, meeting reports, and book reviews. There has been prompter publication of certain kinds of material, especially communications, news, and listings of new books and miscellaneous publications. Attempts have been made to obtain and publish more lead articles of broad appeal. A number of minor changes in style that serve to reduce processing and printing costs have been made. Lately we have been trying to give each paper a preliminary editing at the time of revision or acceptance; authors then have an opportunity to answer queries and pass judgment on

suggested changes before the paper is set in type, thus often reducing the number of alterations that otherwise would have to be made on galley proof.

But much more must be done if *Science* is to become a "news weekly" in the present-day sense of the term. *Science* is not the place for highly specialized technical papers or lead articles of the archive type. Instead, it should be primarily a medium for the very prompt publication of important new advances, brief surveys and reviews of progress in fundamental fields, articles and discussions pertaining to current issues vital to scientists and the sciences, copious news and notes, including brief digests of important articles appearing in other journals, and so on. All this should be couched in the broad language of the sciences but not in the jargon of the highly specialized field of research.

Moreover, in my opinion, it should no longer be considered an accomplishment, as has been the case in some earlier years, to be able to operate the periodicals on a skimpy budget so as to provide additional funds for other Association activities and facilities. Indeed, a next step for the immediate improvement of the periodicals would be to curtail some of the activities that are now taking money away from them. Then, as revenues from subscriptions and advertising gradually increased, as they surely would with improved periodicals, the more worthwhile extraperiodical activities could be resumed and probably even broadened. The potential circulation of a modern news weekly for all scientists is tremendous. Doubtless some members of the Association would look with disfavor on attempts to change radically the character of *Science*, and this is understandable. But the alternative might well be that *Science* will succumb to competition. This would be a pity in view of the price that the AAAS had to pay to acquire ownership of *Science* and the many years of effort that a succession of editors have spent in keeping it going. The comment has been made that a commercial concern rather than the AAAS might have more of the "know how" for putting out a suitable weekly for scientists. What it actually would have is the freedom to assemble the staff and facilities needed to do the job.

—D.R.

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