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## Two Weeks B.C.

Since this issue of *Science* is largely dedicated to the 1960 AAAS meeting, some comment here on this traditional event has become a pleasant practice. This time we are thinking about the care and feeding of program copy—feeding it daily, that is, to an unusually understanding printer. As an omelet is impossible without fractured eggs, so a printed program is nothing without reworked copy.

Converting the raw copy of the 18 sections, of several AAAS committees, and of some 50 societies into a program of 300 pages seems a bit of a chore on some days, on others, a monumental task. We must meet a tight printing schedule—and on some days the copy is rawer than on others!

On deadline day, 1 October, the small office staff at once begins to quarry the avalanche of copy. Each one of us knows that the program must be produced in 8 short weeks. Most observers marvel that it can be done. Precious time would be gained if no program copy had to be retyped, but too often this step is necessary. Despite advance suggestions, many manuscripts arrive single-spaced, full of solid caps, heavily underlined, in pale ditto with letters missing, or laid out like an ad—all difficult for an editor and far too rugged for the tired eyes of linotypists.

As October's golden days merge into sere November, the pace becomes still more frenetic. Sheaves of galley proof deck the desk tops and bury all but the most urgent correspondence. When 125 arrangers return their proof, anguished moments may ensue. Perhaps scheduled days have been changed or larger rooms requested: room assignments must be reshuffled and innocent participants affected. Authors' alterations of the usual type—added papers, renumbered papers, new titles for old, authors' names respelled, forgotten initials inserted—all take time. One missing institutional connection for a participant may necessitate several phone calls and hours of research.

In mid-November, "Pagination Day" brings page proof. Now, would-be authors are shocked to be too late; exhibitors still want booth space; banquet advice is given; and weekly releases on "The Meeting" are prepared for *Science* and other journals. As the news gets out, three telephones interrupt ceaselessly. These are reasonable requests for information, but how one wishes for a single recorded speech that politely could summarize programs in response to: "Can you tell me something about the meeting?" We're in a spot where automation can't help, but our morale wavers not.

In the last two weeks, we are tempted to work after hours, on Saturdays, or even around-the-clock—especially when a 2500-name index looms—but we do resist. And, in D.C., our ladies may not labor longer than 40 hours in any week!

At long last, our annual travail attains its goal, and blissful euphoria prevails. We tilt back, relax slightly, and sincerely rejoice that all advance registrants will get their programs about two weeks B.C.—i.e., before Christmas!—RAYMOND L. TAYLOR, AAAS.