

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Board of Directors

PAUL B. SEARS, *President*
LAURENCE H. SNYDER, *President Elect*
GEORGE W. BEADLE, *Retiring President*
WALLACE R. BRODE
PAUL M. GROSS
GEORGE R. HARRISON
MARK H. INGRAHAM
PAUL E. KLOPSTEG
CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE
MARGARET MEAD
THOMAS PARK
PAUL A. SCHERER, *Treasurer*
DAEL WOLFLE, *Executive Officer*

DAEL WOLFLE, *Executive Officer*
GRAHAM DUSHANE, *Editor*
CHARLOTTE V. MEETING, *Assistant Editor*

Editorial Board

WALLACE R. BRODE KARL LARK-HOROVITZ
BENTLEY GLASS EDWIN M. LERNER
WILLIAM L. STRAUS, JR.

Editorial Staff

MARY L. CRABILL, SARAH S. DEES, OLIVER W.
HEATWOLE, YUKIE KOZAI, JEAN MCCARTHY, ELIZABETH
MCGOVERN, ELLEN E. MURPHY, ROBERT V.
ORMES, BETHSABE PEDERSEN, MADELINE SCHNEIDER,
JOSEPH TURNER, JACQUELYN VOLLMER

EARL J. SCHERAGO, *Advertising Representative*

SCIENCE, founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Business Press, Lancaster, Pa. Entered at the Lancaster, Pa., Post Office as second class matter under the Act of 3 March 1879.

SCIENCE is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in the *Industrial Arts Index*.

Editorial and personnel-placement correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C. Manuscripts should be typed with double spacing and submitted in duplicate. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. For detailed suggestions on the preparation of manuscripts, book reviews, and illustrations, see *Science* 123, 714 (27 Apr. 1956).

Display-advertising correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, Room 604, 11 West 42 St., New York 36, N.Y.

Change of address: The notification should reach us 4 weeks in advance. If possible, please furnish an address stencil label from a recent issue. Be sure to give both old and new addresses, including zone numbers, if any.

Annual subscriptions: \$7.50; foreign postage, \$1; Canadian postage, 50¢. Single copies, 25¢. Special rates to members of the AAAS. Cable address: Advancesci, Washington.

The AAAS also publishes THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY.



"Reports" in *Science*

During 1956 the editorial board and the editorial staff of *Science* reviewed the functions and the scope of the section entitled "Reports" and attempted to define as clearly as possible the policies that should be followed in accepting papers for publication in this section.

It seems clear that the guiding principle for acceptance of reports is the interest of the readers. In this connection, it should be pointed out that reports, which are short technical papers from several fields of science, have a considerable value, both to small libraries and to individual readers who have little access to the specialized literature of science. *Science* plays a larger part in the dissemination of specialized information than may be commonly supposed. Some indication of this is obtainable from data tabulated by C. H. Brown in his recent study of scientific literature [*Scientific Serials* (Association of College and Reference Libraries, Chicago, 1956)]. His tabulations show that in 1954 *Science* was among the 50 publications cited most often in the bibliographies of a balanced selection of the world's specialized journals in five fields: botany, chemistry, geology, physics, and physiology.

Some readers think that the growth and specialization of science have been great enough to make it inappropriate for any journal to publish specialized articles in several fields; others think that the reports are a valuable section of the magazine. The editorial board agrees with the latter view and thinks that we should continue our efforts toward improvement. One way to improve the section in usefulness to both reader and author would be to speed up the rate of publication. Considerable progress has been made in this respect in the last few months. On 1 May 1956 we had on hand 131 accepted papers; by 6 December 1956 we had reduced this backlog to 11. During the same period, we reduced the time for publication (that is, the time from receipt of the paper to publication or, if revision was required, from the time of receipt of the revised report to publication) from an average of more than 5 months to less than 3 months. In order to reduce the time lag for publication still further, we shall in the future urge our referees to return papers to us within 2 weeks. If this can be generally accomplished, we hope to be able to publish reports in 6 weeks or less, on the average.

The problem of what constitutes an acceptable report for a general journal like *Science* is not easily solved. In general, papers have to be judged on a balance of factors, including general interest, interest to readers in more than one field, and interest to the specialist. Papers that are of outstanding merit in any of these respects are favored for acceptance. But there is another factor to be considered: papers must meet our limits of length (not more than 1200 words or the equivalent, including tables or figures).

We hope that by maintaining a rapid schedule of publication we will attract more papers of the kinds that we should publish and that these papers will come to us from a wide variety of fields. If this hope is realized, the probability that any reader will find one or more papers of interest to him among the "Reports" will be increased, and the section will become an even more useful part of *Science*.—G. DuS.