

THE PHYSICAL REVIEW

A journal of experimental and theoretical physics established by E. L. Nichols in 1893

SECOND SERIES, VOL. 176, No. 1

5 DECEMBER 1968

Important Announcement

PAGE CHARGE PROBLEM

We have learned that some institutions have decided to ameliorate budget cuts by suddenly stopping payment of page charges, after having honored them for decades. This will have a disastrous effect on the continuation of our journals. About 70% of the cost of publishing comes from page charges and only 30% from subscriptions. This gives our journals a circulation five or six times as large as that for similar journals without page charges. If the page charge were abolished the subscription price for *The Physical Review* would have to be at least \$600 per year and for *Physical Review Letters* it could rise to \$175 per year with a circulation of perhaps 2000 instead of the present 13 000. Publishing in other journals would, of course, also increase their bulk and subscription rates.

We do not understand the logic of withholding page charges. Does it mean that the institutions openly admit that their work does not merit the expense of publication, except as wasteful preprints, a format eminently suited for filing in trash baskets? We, on the other hand, strongly believe that research is not complete until it is properly published. It has been suggested that Government agencies subsidize journals or take them over altogether. In addition to lowering research budgets, this would make the Government dictate the size of journals, causing delays and backlogs. The page-charge system leaves the control of journals in the hands of the community of research scientists, where it belongs.

Until recently no more than one-sixth of the papers were published without collection of the page charge. Indeed, we consider it essential to provide an outlet for good papers from small institutions for which the page charges represent an excessive fraction of the research budget.

We now fear that there will be a drastic drop in the fraction of the contributors that honor these charges (it has customarily been 85% in the past several years). Every 10-point drop in the percentage means a loss of about \$70 000 in the second half of 1968 and double that in 1969. Moreover, costs have risen faster than expected so that there is already an expected deficit in 1968 of about \$200 000, for *The Physical Review* alone, in addition to the anticipated page charge losses.

Emergency Rules. — The Executive Committee of the American Physical Society, at its meeting on 26 September 1968, resolved that the number of pages published in *The Physical Review* in 1969 should be dependent on the current page-charge income.

Therefore, in order to avoid a catastrophic cessation of publication in the near future, it is necessary to know at an early stage of the publishing process what fraction of Articles will be covered by page charges. At the time of notification of acceptance by the Editor, the author will be asked to send to the publication office a statement indicating whether the page charge will be honored. This requirement will be lifted when a more permanent solution of this problem has been found.

Figures. – In order to give authors an insight into the cost of publishing their work we give here, in an oversimplified form, an account of the principal expenditures and receipts for *The Physical Review* for the first half of 1968. Please note that the amounts are only for half a year, covering 10340 pages of text

Editorial office	\$ 85 000	
Editorial mechanics	89 000	
Composition	370 000	
Gratis reprints	27 000	
Preparation total	<u>\$571 000</u>	
Page charge receipts		\$516 000
Printing and distribution	214 000	
Indexes	32 000	
	<u>\$246 000</u>	
Subscription income		\$184 000

The picture is clear, a total deficit of \$117 000 for the half-year. Next year subscription increases hopefully will take care of the deficit in the distribution part of the operation. Page charges must cover the cost of preparing the paper for printing.

Editorial mechanics is the marking of manuscripts for the printer, reading proofs, and other routine operations performed skillfully at the American Institute of Physics. The editorial office handled 1800 manuscripts, about 30 000 typewritten pages, for *The Physical Review* during the first half-year of 1968. Many papers pass several times over the Editor's desk, and require extensive communication with authors and referees including costly telephone calls. Copy editors read every word you write and check figures, notations, references, and nomenclature. The editorial office is also engaged in studies to speed up and improve the flow and publication of manuscripts.

We hope that research workers fully understand the page-charge problem, which is theirs, and that they will see to it that their institutions properly allocate page-charge payments in their budgets and thus end this threat to the existence of their journals.

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Editor-in-Chief