

## E D I T O R I A L

Publicity

Newspapers and magazines are printing more stories about scientific advances than ever before. The general public is slowly learning that an interest in the progress of science is essential in our modern society. A large portion of the financial support for scientific research comes from public funds. It is, therefore, the duty of the scientist to cooperate with the press and to make sure that the news articles convey the proper meaning of the discoveries and are free from exaggerated claims of importance and usefulness.

Since many of the advances in physics are first published in PHYSICAL REVIEW LETTERS, we send complimentary copies to several science writers. Moreover, we alert them in advance about potentially newsworthy papers, usually through the excellent services of Mr. Eugene Kone, Director of Public Relations for the American Institute of Physics, who has also greatly improved the handling of press conferences and releases at our meetings.

We recommend that our authors check with us or Mr. Kone on matters of press relations. As a matter of courtesy to fellow physicists, it is customary for authors to see to it that releases to the public do not occur before the article appears in the scientific journal. Scientific discoveries are not the proper subject for newspaper scoops and all media of mass communication should have equal opportunity for simultaneous access to the information. In

the future, we may reject papers whose main contents have been published previously in the daily press. While we welcome the intensified interest of the layman in physics research we recognize that formerly crackpots often made the front page with their spectacular stories, and this still happens occasionally. We are sure that our authors do not wish to be confused with these pseudo-scientists in the minds of the public. This can be avoided by using the right publicity channels which will give these stories an authoritative stamp of reliability and the proper dignity. In addition, careful planning and preparation of news material will achieve increased accuracy in the interpretation of science.

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