

E D I T O R I A L

The Letters are getting out of hand again. This journal can fulfill its function only if each issue does not contain more than about a dozen Letters. Fifteen should be the maximum. But we receive over three times as many manuscripts and publish twice as many Letters as we believe to be right. Moreover, "Letters" have grown longer, which would not be objectionable if the increase had resulted in greater clarity.

It is impossible to set precise standards for the acceptance of "Letters"; it is thus also impossible to be consistent in our criteria. There are only a few Letters which obviously deserve rapid publication, and we receive many which clearly do not need this special service. The difficulty is to draw the line among the multitude of "Letters" which fall between these extreme categories. We shall have to be at times arbitrary in our decision.

The following are some of our pet peeves: an author who gets an interesting "Letter" published and now believes that all subsequent results of his work must be published in a series of "Letters"; another author arriving at a later result in the same subject who demands the right to have his work also published as a "Letter"; an author who uses the "Letters" merely to announce a later paper and whose Letter is incomprehensible by itself; an author who submits a "Letter" which is merely an amplification of a previously published meeting abstract; an

author who submits many Letters hoping that statistics rather than quality will cause one to be accepted; an author who carries a chip on his shoulder and casts aspersions on the motives and integrity of a referee who gives an adverse report on his paper; an author who tries to sneak a Letter in to "scoop" a competitor who has already submitted a full Article; an author who fails to make clear in the introduction the scope and significance of his paper; an author who has so little regard for his paper that he doesn't check it for typographical errors and omissions; an author who pays no attention to Physical Review Letters style; etc., etc.

In view of these considerations we shall have to be stricter and thus more arbitrary in our rejection policy for Letters.

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