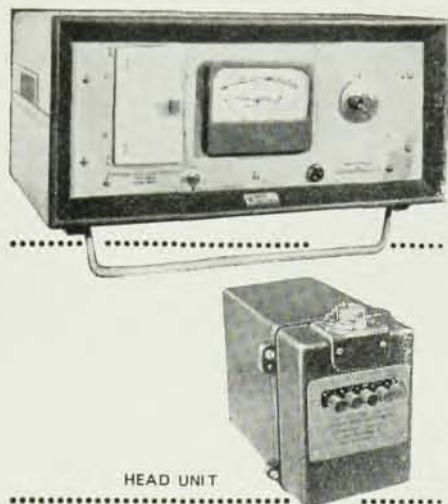


EKCO

VIBRATING REED ELECTROMETER



The newest Vibrating Reed Electrometer Type N616B measures direct currents down to -10^{15} amps full scale using internal resistance! Very low noise and drift— ± 100 Microvolts over 24 hours. Applied D.C. is converted to A.C. by a vibrating reed capacitor and amplified by a stable A.C. amplifier. Output meter calibrated in voltage plus recorder output facility. Proven performance at low cost!

For full information on the N616B Electrometer or on any of the wide range of Ekco Equipment used in research, medicine, aviation and industry in more than 80 countries—write to

EKCO

electronics

EKCO ELECTRONICS LTD SOUTHEND-ON-SEA ENGLAND

In U.S.A. contact associate company
American Tradair Corporation
34-01 30th Street, Long Island City 6, New York
O-397

LETTERS

Properties of Materials at Low Temperatures

Dr. Hilsenrath in his review of the compendium *Properties of Materials at Low Temperatures* (*Physics Today*, August 1962) gave a fair and fully justified account of the regrettable circumstances surrounding the publication of this book. The purpose of this letter is to express sincerest apologies to all concerned, and to give an assurance that this unfortunate matter was entirely unintentional.

Let me say first of all that the fact that the compendium was issued by the Office of Technical Services and, being therefore in the public domain, did not require legal authorization before it could be reprinted, in no way excuses the omission of not consulting the editor and the sponsoring body beforehand. In publishing—and in scientific publishing in particular—a close and friendly cooperation between authors and publisher is of paramount importance, and it is the established practice of Pergamon Press not to publish anything without consulting those concerned with the work in question. We have reprinted a considerable number of publications in the “public domain”, quite a few of them from the National Bureau of Standards, and we have throughout followed this practice and received friendly and constructive cooperation from many authors, for which we are duly grateful. It was through one of those rare but very unfortunate combinations of human errors that this standard procedure was not followed with this compendium; and it was equally unfortunate that by the time our attention was drawn to this mistake through a letter by Dr. Tilley of the NBS, the book had been printed and it was too late to do anything. The human errors occurred because our Oxford office thought that our New York office had followed the usual procedure of consultation and likewise our New York office thought that Oxford had taken care of this.

For all these unhappy events, I, as head of the Pergamon Press, must take the blame and I wish to express my sincerest personal apologies to Dr. Victor F. Johnson, of the NBS Cryogenic Engineering Laboratory, the editor of the compendium, and to all his colleagues who helped with the work, for any embarrassment or annoyance that may have been caused by reprinting the compendium without consulting them.

Robert Maxwell
Pergamon Press Ltd.

Naperian Terminology

John Napier (1550–1617) or, in the Scottish spelling, John Neper, Laird of Merchiston, was a fascinating character to whom science is indebted for important mathematical techniques and terminology. Among these are the Naperian logarithm and the decimal point. In partial commemoration we now have also the neper: a dimensionless unit buried in the exponent of the Naperian base “*e*”. Unfortunately, the Naperian logarithm is usually called the natural logarithm, the origin of the decimal point has been forgotten by most people, if they ever knew it; and the neper is a difficult concept to explain to the nonscientist, besides sounding to the non-Scot like a deliberate parody of the man’s name.