

LETTERS

to the EDITOR

Publications

Sir:

Some time ago Mr. Barton invited comment on the matter of the publication policy for journals sponsored by the Institute of Physics. I am, therefore, taking the liberty of directing to . . . the members of the profession a few thoughts on this question. . . .

I have long held a definite view on some of the evident problems which the Institute must face—and physicists themselves should face; viz., attempting to balance the incommensurate requirements of meeting publication schedules (with increasing volume) without sacrifice of the excellent format and standard of typography in the face of manifold increased publication costs. Let me state my suggestions directly.

It is the obvious one of raising *significantly* (perhaps doubling) the price of all the technical journals. I believe that many physicists will agree with this but let me cite, perhaps unnecessarily, several salient points. (1) Page for page, you cannot anywhere purchase from commercial publishers up-to-date scientific literature of such high quality at such a low, nay, *ridiculously* low price. This fact remains even when one makes due allowance for the non-profit nature of Institute publications. (2) It is unbelievable, if not completely absurd, that the managing staff of the Institute—which after all serves and represents the profession—should have to seek continually other and eventually inadequate temporary measures. The wish to avoid price increase, at least here, is laudable, but does not seem to face the irrefutable fact that our journals can no longer be published effectively, if at all, on the basis of a prewar economy. Let me add my strong conviction that, in particular, cutting the length of accepted articles for economy reasons and greatly delaying publication of papers received does not serve scientific advancement—or anything else.

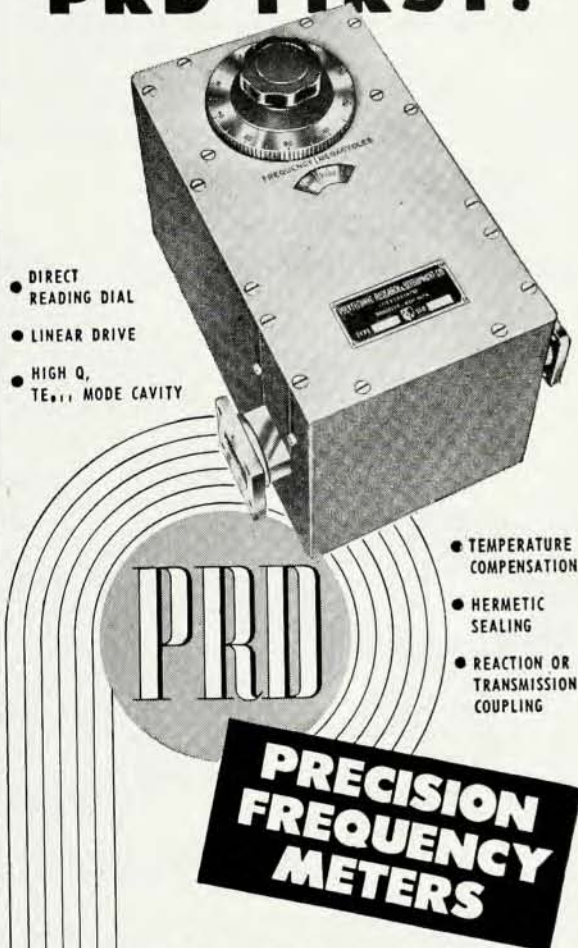
Too, I should like to suggest that in view of the tremendous growth of new theoretical development—as well as the increasing gap between matters theoretical and experimental—the time has regrettably come to form two separate journals devoted respectively to these separate categories insofar as separation is feasible. Perhaps Series A and B of the Physical Review!

Finally, and doubtless in this instance I speak for many, let me express my thanks to the editors, administrators et al. concerned with the difficult—and often unrewarding—task of getting out these excellent technical journals. The type setting is really beautiful work, and in view of the difficult subject matter and the limited time schedule is little short of phenomenal.

E. M. CORSON

Chicago, Illinois

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