

Weeds

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Concerning Authors and Editors

THE EDITORIAL BOARD is having mental pains trying to arrive at a reasonable set of standards for both the length and the content of manuscripts to be published in *WEEDS*. Your editor thought it would be a fairly simple matter to determine the proper length for a given manuscript on the basis of its content, and to tell whether or not the subject had been adequately treated so as to make the article worthy of publication. To slightly paraphrase a common expression, "How naive can one be?"

There is almost unanimous agreement that the Editorial Board must be the executor of editorial policy, and must make the final decisions as to what to publish and what to reject. When, however, one tries to set forth exactly what the editorial policy shall be the fur begins to fly. After many hours of bull sessions, letters, and phone calls concerning quantity and quality of manuscripts, we seem to have two camps emerging. On the one hand there are those who believe that the manuscript shall be subject to plentiful but judicious use of the editor's pencil; that the editor and reviewers should carefully investigate experimental methods, statistical analyses, and reject all papers not meeting these standards. The other group though, views editors and reviewers as a necessary evil inherent in an author's attempt to have his printed words put before the appropriate audience. Since it is the author's communication to his readers and the latter's acceptance or rejection of that communication which makes "the wheels go 'round" in the publishing business, this school of believers feels editors and reviewers should act only as referees, not as rule-makers.

Many and long are the honest differences which exist between "pro-editor" and "pro-author" groups. There is one very important point, however, which the latter often overlooks when exercising its rights and when resisting manuscript revision by the statement, "after all, it is the author who signs the article and it is the author who will be ridiculed if any 'boners' have been pulled". Although this is true to a certain extent, we should not forget that no journal can afford to print many "boners" or other authors will refuse to submit their works. This ultimately leads to the demise of the journal. An even more insidious situation may arise when "boners" are quoted by speakers or by writers of articles or texts supposedly based on scientific facts. It is in this manner that errors creep into text-

books, because each author cannot be a critical specialist in all the fields covered by the several chapters in his text. An author assumes that if it is printed in a scientific journal it cannot be an error or even open to serious question. Students, of course, follow the same reasoning in reading texts. Thus by trying to be liberal with authors and by scrupulously avoiding anything that would stifle the press, editors may actually retard what they are trying to promote, namely, "increased dissemination of sound scientific facts".

So, Mr. Reader, if you would be kind enough to send in your views, we would be happy to hear from you; and, Mr. Author, please remember there are many ramifications to "Freedom of the press". From both may we continue to have tolerance? In the meantime, your editor is trying to steer down the middle.

A National Weed Meeting

A little less than two years ago the officials of the Association of Regional Weed Control Conferences met in Kansas City. Among other items of business they proposed that the representatives of the several conferences determine what the sentiment was "back home" regarding a national weed meeting.

After careful consideration of the many sides to the problem, the individual conferences are now in the process of voting on the question. As we go to press both the North Central and Northeastern Conferences have voted to (1) support a national meeting, (2) continue their regional conferences on an annual basis. By the time you read these paragraphs the Southern and Western Conferences will have reached a decision.

If the four conferences vote in favor of a national meeting, probably the earliest it could possibly be held would be January or February, 1953. Presumably, the Association of Regional Conferences would shoulder the load of planning and organization, and would delegate the details on local arrangements to a committee located near the chosen site. The Northeastern Conference suggested a mid-west location, perhaps Kansas City or St. Louis.

How many would come to a national meeting? How many would it take to finance such a meeting with only a modest registration fee? What type of program would be best? These are samples of the bridges which will have to be crossed if the Southern and Western Conferences vote "yes" to a national meeting.

Weeds will be glad to learn your opinion on a national meeting.