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## About Science

Every week a good many letters, some critical and some laudatory, come into our office. This is all to the good, for it gives us a running impression of reader reaction and stimulates us to decide whether we have sinned and should sin no more or whether we have in fact not sinned at all. But this kind of information is likely to be one-sided: those who are indignant are more inclined to let us know than are those who are pleased.

In order to get a wider and more representative view of reader reaction, we recently sent out a questionnaire to approximately 6200 of our 62,000 subscribers. More than 3500 people have now returned the forms, and of these, more than 2000 wrote short comments to amplify their views. They made scores of suggestions—for possible modification in different sections of the journal, for the introduction of new sections, and for ways in which policy should be determined. Although every shade of opinion was expressed, it is clear that most readers heartily approve the "Current Problems in Research" series of articles, the new type face, the cover design, and the cover picture.

The questionnaire not only tells us how well we are meeting the needs of our readers and what changes might be desirable but also tells us much about our readers. Our composite reader is intelligent, literate, articulate, thoughtful, critical, and constructive. But a composite reader is a convenient fiction; our readers are decidedly individuals. Fifty-three percent of them spend, on the average, an hour each week reading *Science*, and 52 percent pass their copies along to one or more additional readers. On the basis of this information we can estimate that, without counting those who read *Science* in libraries, we have at least 130,000 readers. Eighty-three percent usually read the editorials; 78 percent read the articles; 67 percent, the book reviews; and 63 percent, the technical reports. Doubtless the percentage who read the news falls somewhere in this range, but our questionnaire was poorly designed in some respects, as many pointed out ("next time get a professional to plan your questionnaire") and did not shed much light on reader use of the news section.

We also asked whether each section should be enlarged, left as it is, reduced, or eliminated. "Left as it is" won out in every case, but there were many votes (percentages in parentheses) for enlarging the following: leading articles (20), news (13), book reviews (15), and reports (22).

Few readers shared the view of the one who said that if we needed the kind of advice we asked for we were incompetent and ought to resign. On the contrary, almost all took the opportunity to express constructive suggestions or well-considered criticisms, all of which will be of great help to us in charting our future course. A few typical comments were: "Make no drastic change; one does not like to see a familiar friend change too much too quickly"; "I depend on *Science* to keep me current in fields other than my own"; "I enjoy *Science*, but selectively"; and finally (and there were many like this), "*Science* is fine as it is."—G.DuS.