

GENERAL SCIENCE

Covering the Science Front

Science Service since 1921 has been telling the public through newspapers and other mass media about science and technology. Cooperation is desired from all engaged in research and in information activities for laboratories, universities, industries, etc.

► BECAUSE SCIENCE SERVICE since 1921 has been a major channel for reaching a large portion of the reading public, we want everyone who handles information or issues press releases to know how we operate.

We cover the broad fields of science—physics, chemistry, medicine, biology, astronomy, anthropology, archaeology, psychology, mathematics, atomics, electronics, etc.—by a specialized science writing staff, highly skilled scientifically and competent journalistically. In general, we do not ask our medical writer to cover atomic physics or our chemical writer to dig into archaeology.

Complete Science Coverage

Our first concern is to put into our wire and mail service to newspapers and other publications a complete coverage of science in all its aspects. This means that when there is a conference at which a paper is delivered, that conference and that paper is possible grist for our service to newspapers.

We put out the material daily by wire and mail. Therefore, we want the information just as early as we can get it. Most effectively, we like to send out material under future release date which we call "Wire by Mail."

Each day in the early afternoon we prepare our two reports, one by wire and one by mail. The wire report is aimed primarily at newspapers publishing the next afternoon and is transmitted to them on overnight wires. The mail report carries the released-dated stories and spot material as well as an adaptation of many of the wires. We thus have a daily closing date.

We also issue a weekly feature packet, including an illustrated feature story, a new ideas and gadgets column and a nature article, both illustrated.

Other newspaper services include a filler service of five paragraphs daily, called Science Shorts; and a monthly article, Map of the Stars.

All of this material, together with additional photographs, etc., are made currently available to the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. We do not actually write directly for the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER primarily. We do, however, utilize in the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER photographs in considerable number and we are particularly interested in having the kind with "cover quality." This can best be explained by looking at the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER.

Whole World Our Beat

The whole world of science is our beat. We follow and cover meetings, conferences and congresses by the hundreds. We watch scientific and technical journals by the score,

often seeing page proofs before publication. We engage in corridor gossip with hundreds of scientists. We keep telephone contact with distant laboratories, following up research we know or sense is in progress.

Most of all, we endeavor to know what is going to happen or be printable tomorrow, or three or four days hence, or in the next month or two. What happened yesterday or last week or month is of much less interest, although in a few instances it can be top news.

So we have set up methods of getting papers in advance. We wire, phone and write for a copy of that speech that we know may be important. We do telephonic interviews and the standing instruction is *never* ask how much the long distance call costs, for that is inhibiting to the free flow of the interview.

Applied to institution publicity, we urge and entreat those in public relations to think of SCIENCE SERVICE if not first, at least not last, and always. Slip us a carbon of the copy of the hand-out as it goes to the mimeograph or before. If the hand-out is important and late, it will be worth while perhaps to both of us for you to wire it to us *press rate*, preferably your expense, but wire it: SCIENCE SERVICE, Washington, D. C. In any event, anything you issue is worth air mail and special delivery.

In some instances, PR representatives are in a position to furnish us special versions of handouts (so we do not have to rewrite the hand-out in our shop) and we then consider them correspondents and pay them accordingly.

About Correspondents

About correspondents. We do not have exclusive staff writers or correspondents in various geographical areas, but we do receive and sometimes appreciate free-lance material, particularly from those who know what we want and on whom we can rely, from the standpoint of scientific accuracy and timeliness.

Above all, our stories must be "interesting, and true" not "interesting, if true." Our standards of accuracy are and must be high, perhaps higher than that of other science reporting efforts.

We are attempting to develop and utilize new and effective methods of science presentation. One of these is the SCIENCE SERVICE GRAND JURY technique, by which moot questions are put to a group of experts who answer with assured anonymity. Some of the verdicts are very different from what they would have been if the experts were being quoted by name.

Our newspaper services reach over 9,000,000 newspaper circulation, or 17.3%

of the U.S. daily newspaper circulation in metropolitan areas.

THINGS of science is a unique monthly membership service of experimental kits and specimens. Any organization that has a new product and can supply 25,000 to 30,000 small samples should cooperate in this exciting method of science popularization and education.

National Science Youth Program

About a million youths in the nation participate annually in SCIENCE SERVICE's National Science Youth Program, doing projects and making exhibits shown in science fairs. Some 25,000 science teachers and other science youth leaders, mostly in the nation's secondary schools, and any adult, upon request, is sent without charge "know-how" literature and material for inspiring and instructing science students.

The National Science Youth Program (consisting of Science Clubs of America, National Science Fair and the Science Talent Search) needs the cooperation, particularly, of all colleges and universities. It is grass roots, in every region, and reaches the scientists of tomorrow who will come to colleges from the high schools. Where there is not a science fair, SCIENCE SERVICE can help inaugurate this great incentive to science talent.

SCIENCE SERVICE edits and publishes books, prepares articles, produces sets of slides, film strips, TV films, and other visual aids. Its collection of photographs is extensive. We have participated in radio since the early days of broadcasting.

Science in a Democracy

In the early days of SCIENCE SERVICE, a statement of our general purposes was formulated that is worth repeating from time to time:

In a democracy like ours it is particularly important that people as a whole should so far as possible understand the aims and achievements of modern science, not only because of the value of such knowledge to themselves but because research directly or indirectly depends upon popular appreciation of its methods. The specialist is likewise a layman in every science except his own and he, too, needs to have new things explained to him in non-technical language. Scientific progress is so rapid and revolutionary these days that no one can keep up with it without some means of keeping in close contact with its new ideas and discoveries.

• Science News Letter, 81:370 June 16, 1962