

Notes

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

(Extract from Geology, Vol. 14, No. 8, p. 718)

Scientific progress is often made by departing from conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom, however, often dictates what is being published by major scientific journals today, geological publications are no exception. Thus conventional wisdom can have negative effects on the peer-review process and on scientific progress.

..... Progress in science is made through the introduction and successful testing of new ideas, many of which are bound to displace and overthrow conventional ideas. Unfortunately many reviewers are so tied to the unconventional wisdom that they feel duty-bound to go to extraordinary measures for rejecting a manuscript with unconventional ideas. The main problem is that the anonymous reviewer failed to state any justifiable reason for rejecting the manuscript. Fortunately good manuscripts, even though the ideas expressed are controversial, will eventually get through the peer-review process. What is lost, however, is valuable time in getting these new ideas to the scientific community. Furthermore, there is a significant reshaping of ideas during the review and rewrite process in order to appease the reviewers, so that the manuscript loses at least some of its original content and effectiveness.

I believe that this time delay could be avoided by introducing a new section into journals whose primary goal is to publish innovative and provocative articles of general interest. The editor, the author and the reviewer would have equal responsibility in deciding what manuscript should be published in this section for controversial articles. The conditions would be : (1) the author must clearly identify the controversial contributions of the manuscript ; (2) the reviewer cannot remain anonymous ; and (3) if the reviewer and editor reject a manuscript, but the author still wishes to publish the article, the reviewer's comments should be published along with the article. This will force all involved to be more objective in their responsibility to science. —G. SHANMUGAM, *Mobil Res. and Dev. Corpn., Dallas, Texas 75381*

Announcement

SEMINAR ON STONE INDUSTRY

On the occasion of the International Granite and Stone Fair to be held at Bangalore from 5th to 8th February 1987, it is proposed to hold a one-day Seminar on Ornamental Stone Industry on 6th February, 1987 under the joint auspices of the Geological Society of India and the All India Granites and Stone Association. The seminar will focus attention on building stones in general and ornamental stones in particular and the role they play in modern civilized living. Building and ornamental stones have gained great prominence in recent years and constitute an important industry. Increasing demand for building and ornamental stones in the country and the ever increasing export potential of ornamental stones has necessitated systematic study of the building/ornamental stone industry. The proposed seminar is being organised to provide a common platform for all those who are involved in the development of this industry—administrators, quarry owners, machinery manufacturers, etc.

Such of those who are interested are requested to contact Sri R. H. Sawkar, Secretary, Geological Society of India, B. B. D. Power Press, Cottonpet, Bangalore 560 053 for further details.