

## Foreword

Almost all physics journals are restricted to fairly narrow fields, and not much room is available for debating fundamental questions on the very foundations of those fields. A journal with a much wider compass, and with a critical attitude for the premises that form the foundation blocks of the various branches of physics, can certainly find a place in the literature of physical sciences. The new journal *Physics Essays* promises to fulfill such a role and will be welcomed by many physicists who feel that the philosophical and scientific foundations of physics need further in-depth discussion. It will also be welcomed by those who feel a need for more interdisciplinary discussions within the physics community, where the cross-fertilization of ideas plays a fundamental role in the advancement of science. The new journal promises also to give greater freedom to authors in discussing critical and unsettled points in the foundations of physics, a policy that relieves some of the rigidity of the present reviewing system adopted by many journals.

The development of physics and other sciences is seriously threatened by the attitude of almost all politicians and many governments that science has to be controlled by them to ensure maximum benefit to the economy

of their countries. They do not acknowledge that science (and particularly physics) has a value of its own independent of its many applications. The eminent physical-chemist Michael Polanyi stated the problem in an elegant way:

Any attempt at guiding scientific research towards a purpose other than its own is an attempt to deflect it from the advancement of science. ... You can kill or mutilate the advance of science, you cannot shape it. For it can advance only by essentially unpredictable steps, pursuing problems of its own, and the practical benefits of these advances will be incidental and hence doubly unpredictable.

It is to foster this attitude towards science that *Physics Essays* has been founded.

It is my pleasure and privilege to wish the new journal all possible success. May it contribute to the better understanding of the foundations and development of physics and inspire an attitude of appreciation for the value of unrestrained scientific inquiry.

*G. Herzberg*