

PUBLICATION POLICY OF THE CANADIAN MINERALOGIST

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The Canadian Mineralogist is published by the Mineralogical Association of Canada. The extent to which this journal should confine itself to serving the interests of the mineralogical specialist has been a matter for recurring debate in some circles of the Association, and it is the purpose of this note to examine the question and, hopefully, to provide some clarification on this matter, and on related issues involving publication policy.

The chief purpose of the journal is to convey information of interest to mineralogists and to others who might be expected to make use of mineralogical information. The questions that should be considered by a prospective author in deciding whether material merits publication are a) does the paper present new information? b) is it comprehensible? and c) is it scientifically sound? The editor, and the technical referees to whom the paper is referred, must also keep these considerations uppermost, but they have an additional responsibility—to judge whether the presentation can be improved significantly by changes in the text, tables or illustrations.

Wide latitude is given in the type of new information accepted for publication. At one end of the spectrum are descriptive papers that present details of new mineral occurrences or unusual mineral assemblages; at the other, theoretical concepts that lead to a fuller understanding of the constitution of minerals. Occupying the middle ground are, for example, reports on new or improved methods of investigating minerals, new or refined data on mineral properties, and crystal structures of minerals, to name but a few.

Comprehension is a more difficult matter on which to pass judgement since mineralogy is not a discrete scientific specialty in the normally-accepted sense, but is, rather, an interdisciplinary science that uses the techniques and concepts of such specialties as crystallography, optics, physical chemistry, geology, solid-state physics and thermodynamics to provide information about the properties and behaviour of minerals. The particular blend of specialties that constitutes the make-up of a given mineralogist depends on his training, interests and work requirements, and may well differ significantly from that of his colleague. Thus, what is familiar territory to one mineralogist may well be relative *terra incognita* to another. A further complicating factor is that mineralogical

information is frequently used by other scientists who are not likely to have a broad mineralogical background. The question of how much explanatory detail should be incorporated in a paper is therefore a matter of judgement on the part of the author, the editor, and the referees. A uniform standard is unrealistic under these circumstances. Perhaps the best that can be said on the matter is that the author should have a clear conception of the readership to which his paper is directed, and that the wealth, or paucity, of detail provided be consistent with this conception.

Scientific soundness should be an unequivocal precept, but it is not achieved solely by statistical analysis. Certainly all reported observations and measurements should be reproducible, within certain limits, by another observer. But should a statistical analysis be made of all reported mineralogical observations? Unquestionably many types of measurements can be treated statistically, and authors are urged to undertake statistical analyses in these cases. On the other hand, many observations are of a qualitative nature, and are less readily amenable, if at all, to statistical treatment; in such cases it is better to have qualitative assessments than none at all. This is again a matter of judgement for the parties concerned with writing and evaluating the technical paper.

In summary, although no firm rules regulating publication policy for *The Canadian Mineralogist* are proposed, nevertheless some guidelines are suggested, and some indication is given of the problems confronting an editor in attempting to maintain reasonable and consistent standards. It should be added, parenthetically, that this note has been read and approved before publication by the other members of the executive of the Mineralogical Association of Canada, including the editor of *The Canadian Mineralogist*.

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**GEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
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Annual Meetings 1970**

Geological Association of Canada and the Mineralogical Association of Canada, joint meeting, Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 30–September 2, 1970. Special sessions on geoscience studies in Manitoba, pegmatite minerals and the history of Canadian geologists. Inquiries to R. F. J. Scoates, Manitoba Mines Branch, 900 Norquay Building, Winnipeg.