Among the things that editors worry about is whether or not in the review process, we eliminate from broader distribution those articles expressing ideas that, at the moment, may seem a little farfetched. This has another component, which is the failure of a journal to receive such articles if the perception exists that there is little chance of getting them published. The recent increase in the formalistic articulation of economic concepts raises the prospect that the time will come when some economic ideas of great import will not see the light of day because they do not lend themselves to expression in such form. In my discussions with a number of economists, the point is often raised that all journals are becoming more formal (mathematical), and this is a cause for concern on the part of everyone I talk with—including those whose mathematical skills are not only well developed, but often on display.

The general concern is that this dominant form of communication precludes the type of thought process that was so much a part of the classical tradition in our discipline. This does not mean that formal models of either a theoretical or an empirical nature are irrelevant to our discourse over economics and natural resource policy. But it does mean that many good ideas and important concepts that do not lend themselves to formalistic expression are being driven out of economics journals into other media where economists have fewer chances to see them.

Having worried about this issue for some time, it seems appropriate to make an effort to test the hypothesis that there are good economic questions and issues which warrant wide circulation, but which do not lend themselves to the longer and more detailed articles that we have traditionally published. It is with this in mind, that we established a section entitled “Speculations,” which is devoted to the publication of brief statements by economists on any topic that has traditionally been relevant to LAND ECONOMICS. I ask only that the statements be less than ten double-spaced pages and that they focus on economic questions of interest to our readers. I hope that authors will consider this an opportunity to raise questions of a constructive nature about economic issues which warrant closer scrutiny.

The submissions are reviewed by me, though I may seek advice from members of the Editorial Board. The intent is to speed up the review process with the idea that extensive revisions and modifications would not be the norm. We are under no need to publish any set number of such submissions and prefer to have the “Speculations” section expand and contract as the supply of accepted articles dictates.

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