

Editors' Notes

EDITORS' REPORT, SEPTEMBER 1992

Quiet flows the JOURNAL. There is no danger that it will dry up or change course, leaving its usual constituents high and dry. Manuscripts of high quality continue to arrive, even though the JOURNAL still declines to solicit papers. The refereeing and editing process continues to polish the best offerings into a product to be proud of. Referees, particularly those on the editorial board, continue to give their thought and time freely—that is, with no more pay than the promise of anonymity plus our sincere confidential thanks. And the necessary financial support is still there, even though both editorial offices are located in states that ran out of cash this year. Brown and the University of California, like Kansas, are honoring their pledges of support, and the Association has plugged the gaps, thanks to prudent financial management by Bill and RuthAnne Becker and the trustees.

If the JOURNAL is on course, it is because visible hands have kept it on course in the past. Outgoing editor Tom Weiss has continued his predecessors' tradition of attention to detail. The tradition of high professionalism in editing promises to continue. Pamela Evans at Davis is a copyeditor's copyeditor, a topflight teacher of the subject and free-lance editor who manages to uphold the JOURNAL's high standards while retaining the sense of humor one needs for this job. Humor was needed by the new editorial team at Brown this summer, as they had to start operating two months before their office on Thayer Street was available. Naomi Lamoreaux and Larry Carney are now serving authors and readers on the American side with care and efficiency.

The JOURNAL continues to provide relatively fast service for its authors. In the last two years' reports, Tom Weiss has offered quantitative data on our turnaround time. In this election year I shall, like the presidential candidates, repeat the same old claims but not back them up with any hard facts. In truth, the data on turnaround times from submission to decision or publication are as hard to interpret as they are to gather from complicated records. Behind the average times lie a great majority of cases speedily resolved and a few cases in which the delays are of the type that do authors and readers a favor. The few cases that drag out for a year or more are revise-and-resubmit cases, in which the final product is far superior to the submitted product, whether it appears in this or some other journal. Be assured that the editing operation continues to be prompted by the relevant test: there is no pileup in the in-basket and no legion of authors wondering what happened to the paper they submitted. We promise fast service, no matter how long it takes.

The numbers show a normal flow of manuscripts, one slightly below last year's peak. We continue to receive 120 to 130 manuscripts a year, excluding resubmissions, notes, and the June Tasks issue. Counting these extra submissions would raise the total to about 170 to 180 a year, as in the past. Acceptance rates are 16 to 17 percent for regular submissions, or slightly lower if resubmissions are included in the denominator. Although prospective authors might be tempted to judge acceptance probabilities from the data on acceptance rates by topic area, doing so is hazardous, primarily because the ex post average rate is not the ex ante marginal rate.¹

There are interesting patterns in the topics of submissions and acceptances. On the non-American side, British economic history is being challenged for its usual share of

¹ Two specific-topic illustrations should suffice. The JOURNAL has happily accepted every single manuscript it has received on the topic of razorbacks, ticky cows, and the closing of the Georgia open range. We have also been pleased to accept every single submission we have received on calorie intake in Belgium in the early nineteenth century. It does not follow, however, that the acceptance probability for another manuscript in either area has the same certainty.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTANCES BY FIELD, JULY 1988–JUNE 1992

	Submissions		Acceptances	
	American	Non-American	American	Non-American
Agriculture	24	25	6	6
Demography	13	17	4	4
Growth	9	16	1	3
Industry	30	22	5	8
Technology	8	9	1	1
Labor	62	21	17	1
Money and macro	61	46	7	4
Public finance	9	4	0	3
History of thought	8	5	1	0
International trade, finance	7	18	3	3
Urban and regional	14	3	1	0
Political economy	38	19	2	1
Other	1	2	2	0
Total	284	207	50	34

page space by a rise in work, particularly quantitative work, on France. The usual display of paper counts by subject area does reveal a pattern worth pondering, even though the usual categories make it hard to classify papers on, say, health or education or financial markets or living standards. Papers concentrate in two worthy subject areas, labor and money/macro. What is curious is the continuing neglect of some other fields, fields that take larger shares of our curriculum in both Economics and History departments. In particular, it is hard to explain the continuing neglect of public finance, noted by Paul Hohenberg's editorial report four years ago. Why so few papers in this area? Do we live in an age in which the problems of public finance have been solved—no serious budget deficits, no controversy over who pays the taxes or who gets the benefits from public spending? Is public finance an area in which a study of the past has little to offer, or an area in which ahistorical economists have already come up with good explanations? Perhaps economic historians should turn more of their versatility to such areas of relative neglect.

In addition to the members of the editorial board, the following outside referees deserve our thanks for their generous assistance during the year:

Robert Antonio, <i>University of Kansas</i>	Tyler Cowen, <i>University of California, Irvine</i>
Daniel A. Baugh, <i>Cornell University</i>	Michael Edelstein, <i>Queens College—CUNY</i>
Richard F. Bensel, <i>New School</i>	Barry Eichengreen, <i>University of California, Berkeley</i>
Michael D. Bordo, <i>Rutgers University</i>	Stanley Engerman, <i>University of Rochester</i>
S. N. Broadberry, <i>University of Warwick</i>	David Feeny, <i>McMaster University</i>
Charles Calomiris, <i>University of Illinois, Champaign</i>	Stefano Fenoaltea, <i>University of Pennsylvania</i>
Byron Cannon, <i>University of Utah</i>	Alexander J. Field, <i>Santa Clara University</i>
Philip D. Curtin, <i>Johns Hopkins University</i>	Albert Fishlow, <i>University of California, Berkeley</i>
Susan B. Carter, <i>University of California, Riverside</i>	
Sally H. Clarke, <i>University of Texas</i>	
John H. Coatsworth, <i>University of Chicago</i>	

- Edward P. Fitzgerald, *Carleton University*
 James Foreman-Peck, *St. Anthony's College, Oxford*
 Gerald Friedman, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*
 Claudia Goldin, *Harvard University*
 George W. Grantham, *McGill University*
 Mary Gregson, *University of Illinois*
 Avner Greif, *Stanford University*
 Richard S. Grossman, *Wesleyan University*
 Timothy W. Guinnane, *Princeton University*
 Stephen Haber, *Stanford University*
 Susan B. Hanley, *University of Washington*
 John R. Hanson II, *Texas A&M University*
 Paul M. Hohenberg, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*
 David Hounshell, *Carnegie-Mellon University*
 Michael Huberman, *Trent University*
 Paul F. Huck, *Wake Forest University*
 Jane Humphries, *University of Cambridge*
 Sanford Jacoby, *University of California, Los Angeles*
 Harold James, *Princeton University*
 John A. James, *University of Virginia*
 Eric L. Jones, *La Trobe University*
 Shawn E. Kantor, *University of Arizona*
 Steven Kaplan, *Cornell University*
 John Komlos, *University of Pittsburgh*
 Norma Landau, *University of California, Davis*
 John B. Legler, *University of Georgia*
 Frank Lewis, *Queen's University*
 Gary Libecap, *University of Arizona*
 David Ludden, *University of Pennsylvania*
 Charles McCurdy, *University of Virginia*
 Gloria L. Main, *University of Colorado, Boulder*
 Robert A. Margo, *Vanderbilt University*
 Barbara Metcalf, *University of California, Davis*
 Philip Mirowski, *Tufts University*
 Joel Mokyr, *Northwestern University*
 Cynthia Taft Morris, *Smith College*
 Carl Mosk, *University of Victoria*
 John H. A. Munro, *University of Toronto*
 Daniel Nelson, *University of Akron*
 Anthony O'Brien, *Lehigh University*
 Kerry A. Odell, *Scripps College*
 Cormac Ó Gráda, *University College, Dublin*
 Martha L. Olney, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*
 Sule Ozler, *University of California, Los Angeles*
 Edwin J. Perkins, *University of Southern California*
 Clayne Pope, *Brigham Young University*
 Leslie Pressnell
 Daniel Raff, *Harvard University*
 Edward John Ray, *Ohio State University*
 Alan Richards, *University of California, Santa Cruz*
 James C. Riley, *Indiana University*
 Hugh T. Rockoff, *Rutgers University*
 Christina D. Romer, *University of California, Berkeley*
 Joshua L. Rosenbloom, *University of Kansas*
 Elyce J. Rotella, *Indiana University*
 Winifred Rothenberg, *Tufts University*
 Richard J. Salvucci, *University of California, Berkeley*
 Lars G. Sandberg, *Ohio State University*
 Harry N. Scheiber, *University of California, Berkeley*
 Larry Schweikart, *University of Dayton*
 Carole Shammas, *University of California, Riverside*
 Timothy Silver, *Appalachian State University*
 Ken Snowden, *University of North Carolina, Greensboro*
 Kenneth Sokoloff, *University of California, Los Angeles*
 Peter M. Solar, *University of Leuven*
 Solomos Solomou, *University of Cambridge*
 Martin C. Spechler, *Indiana University, Indianapolis*
 Richard J. Sullivan, *College of the Holy Cross*
 William A. Sundstrom, *Santa Clara University*
 Richard Sutch, *University of California, Berkeley*

Peter Temin, *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Thomas Ulen, *University of Illinois*

David Weiman, *Yale University*

David Weir, *Yale University and l'INRA*

Warren C. Whatley, *University of Michigan*

Elmus R. Wicker, *Indiana University*

Barry Wigmore, *The Goldman Sachs Group*

Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Harvard University*

Edward Wolff, *New York University*

Gavin Wright, *Stanford University*

CALL FOR PAPERS

The nineteenth Conference on the Application of Quantitative Methods in Canadian Economic History will be held on April 8–9, 1994, at McGill University in Montreal. The 1994 meeting is intended to honor the contributions of M. C. Urquhart to Canadian economic history; papers should reflect that theme, though a wide range of topics and a variety of quantitative and theoretical methods may be appropriate. The organizers hope to publish a volume based on a selection of the papers given. Interested scholars should submit a brief abstract and a copy of their curriculum vitae by July 1, 1993, to Mary MacKinnon, Department of Economics, McGill University, 855 Sherbrooke Street W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T7; fax, (514) 398-4938; E-mail, MARY@FACL.lan.McGill.ca.