Editorial Note

Readers of the Journal who glance at its Title Page (not the front cover but the right-hand page immediately preceding this one) may have noticed a change in format and since this indicates changes in Editorial Policy some explanation is called for. Since its inception in 1917 the Journal has never had an Editor in the true sense of the word; its affairs have been run by an Editorial Committee which met once a month to decide policy, what type of contributions should be published, the contents of forthcoming issues, etc., and its decisions were implemented by its Chairman who was thus, in a way, simply its Executive Officer. In addition there was a “General Committee” which used to include representatives from Australia, Canada, and many other Commonwealth countries. Some 10 years ago the General Committee was reconstituted, omitting Commonwealth representatives and replacing them by members from some of the most important Ophthalmic Centres in the British Isles. For various reasons, especially perhaps the logistic difficulties of attending monthly meetings in London, the new General Committee has not been able to play as full a part in the affairs of the Journal as had been hoped.

A joint and very fully attended meeting of the Editorial and General Committees was held recently and various policy decisions were taken. It will be seen from the Title Page that the Journal is now to be run by an Editor (in the true sense of the word) with two assistants. This small body will be solely responsible for the month-to-month affairs of the Journal, the contents of each issue, and any urgent matters. In addition, there is a larger Editorial Committee of twelve members with country-wide representation which will meet once or twice a year to discuss broad issues of general policy with the Editor and his assistants and will advise the Editor on the merits of papers submitted for publication.

Further decisions were taken, perhaps the most important of which were that there should be greater eclecticism in the acceptance of papers and that, once accepted, papers should not necessarily have to take their place in the queue for publication. The previous—and the new—Editorial Committee know full well that a major and, we agree, valid criticism of the Journal, especially among the younger and more productive generation of ophthalmologists, has been the delay, often of a year or more, between the sub-
mission of a good paper and its appearance in print. It is hoped under the new agreed policy that really important and valuable papers will be published in something like two to three, and certainly not more than six, months after they have been accepted.

Prospective contributors are urged, in their own interest, to read carefully the Notice on the inside of the front cover. In future the requirements here specified will be more rigidly applied, and papers and illustrations which do not meet the required standard will be returned to their authors for revision, provided that, when revised, it is considered that the paper may be worth publishing; otherwise such papers will be returned as "rejected". "Case Reports" will still be welcomed, but again contributors are advised to read the inside front cover and particularly Paragraph 3. Scientific papers will also be accepted provided that they have a clinical interest.

The policy changes adumbrated will not become immediately apparent; they fall perhaps into what the late Sidney Webb described as "the inevitability of gradualness". Nevertheless we hope that contributors will be encouraged to submit papers to this Journal rather than to others in which they know that the chances of earlier publication are rather better, and we hope also that the "new look" will make our Journal more attractive and more valuable to its world-wide readers.

Constructive suggestions will always be welcomed and criticisms will be carefully considered in the light of the spirit in which they are tendered.