

Editorial: Some changes

Readers may have noticed that Sir Stephen Miller ceased to be Editor of the *BJO* at the beginning of 1984. His place is taken by Redmond J. H. Smith, who has a hard task ahead of him to keep up the standards set by his eminent predecessor. Sir Stephen became Editor in 1973, so that he occupied the chair for 11 years. During that period it is widely acknowledged that the standard of the journal steadily rose, so that it is now one of the star performers in the *BMJ* group of publications.

No drastic changes are planned for the future, readers will be glad to hear, but nevertheless certain slight differences may gradually appear over the next few months. It must be realised that when an editor gives up, his parting from the journal is gradual, because articles which the former editor has approved continue to appear for several months. However, by the time this editorial hits the mat most of them will have been accepted after his time, and the slight differences alluded to may have become perceptible.

Two changes are planned. First, the system of delaying publication of some papers and accelerating others to enable subject-orientated issues to be produced is, for a trial period, to be stopped. Instead a policy of publication in order of acceptance is to be followed. This will have two main effects. Each journal is more likely to contain a mix of papers which should include one or more of special interest

to practically every reader, and secondly papers will not be held up in the pipeline, a change which should be popular with authors. The other feature which is to be tried is an editorial comment on one or more papers in the journal. The difficulty with these editorials in the past has been logistical. A specialist in a given subject was commissioned to write an expert editorial on what might in any case be a fairly esoteric subject, but unfortunately he sometimes failed to produce the manuscript by the deadline needed to enable it to be included in the appropriate issue of the journal. Hence editorials were finally abandoned; the last appeared in August 1981.

What we hope to try is a series of editorials written by the Editor and Assistant Editors themselves, so that if the deadline is lost they have only themselves to blame. Such editorials will consist of comment from the point of view of the average ophthalmologist in contrast to the heavily referenced, specialist editorials which have appeared in the past. The Editor takes the view that the articles in the journal should be of interest to and comprehensible by the average *BJO* reader, and it is hoped that editorial comment may assist readers rather than dazzle them with science. Finally, we offer our greetings to David Spalton, a new member of the Editorial Committee, who will be a welcome addition to the present team.

REDMOND J. H. SMITH