A change of management

From 1 April 1992 an unannounced change occurred within the organisation of the journal which was doubtless noticed by those of our readers who regularly scan the cover and title pages. Mr Redmond Smith retired as editor and the burden of responsibility is now mine. 'Red', as he is affectionately known to his friends and colleagues, has been associated with the journal for over 30 years, eight of them as editor. During that time many changes and improvements have been introduced to both the format and the content of the journal. A notable feature has been the 'mini review' which many readers have found valuable. As editor, Red was tireless in his efforts in obtaining a fair review of submitted articles and regarded it as his responsibility to ensure that each article was relevant to the aims of the journal and of interest to the readership. Accordingly there was a strong commitment to the judicious editorial. During his period as editor, the publication time for papers has recently been reduced to six months despite an ever increasing number of submitted articles. Redmond conducted the business of the journal with calm and equanimity, and on behalf of the readers, I would like to extend to him our warmest thanks.

Of course with a new editor there are new ways of conducting business. While the aims of the journal will remain broadly the same, namely to foster dialogue in clinical ophthalmology and to reflect current opinion in ophthalmology generally, new ideas will be especially welcome. Plans for the journal are still in the formative stage, but considerable thought is being given to ways of raising the profile of investigative ophthalmology within its pages. In addition, a new format for the case report might be appropriate. These are only a few of the concerns for the editor and his board and feedback from the readership would be welcome.

A change in editorship is an opportune moment to ask what we want from a journal. In the case of the BJ O, it is time we looked further afield for answers. Ophthalmology is very much an international activity with the flow of ideas rapidly crossing national boundaries. For this reason the editorial board has been expanded to include members from Europe, Australia, and North America, and they, with the other new UK members of the board, are welcomed. Hopefully, this will ensure that the international flow of ideas through the pages of the journal is always in multiple directions.

There are many current journals relating to ophthalmology and new ones appear every year, often with a highly specialised field of interest. This may reflect increased levels of research and clinical activity, but it may also indicate that highly specialised articles have difficulty in finding a place in the more general ophthalmic journals. The main criterion of acceptance for journal articles, however, should rest on the quality of the work reported, and journals of general ophthalmology should provide appropriate space for highly specialised material, as indeed many already do. This encourages high quality research to be undertaken especially by our younger ophthalmic colleagues and those in training and, in the end, reaps benefits for the specialty.

The BJ O has a long and illustrious past and has been served well by many, particularly its most recent editor. Its future is dependent on new blood and new ideas which will carry it forward into the next century. A sign of health is the ability to respond to and to initiate change and hopefully these changes can be made by building on the achievements of the past.

J V FORRESTER

A reminder that papers intended for publication should now be sent to Professor Forrester at the Department of Ophthalmology, University of Aberdeen Medical School, Foresterhill, Aberdeen AB9 2ZD, Scotland.