

Editorial

THE FUTURE

THE journal of a progressive and growing institution is the mirror of its progress. Looking back over the years each step in the growth of our College has been reflected in the pages of the *College Journal*. Thus we have graduated from a newsletter for those who expressed an interest in research to a 'House' periodical for internal circulation amongst the membership, and then to a freely competitive journal carrying information about the College to all parts of the world.

Editorially, we have seen our task as wider than just to produce a journal about the College and its activities. One of the aims of the College is to encourage publication of material about general practice and to provide a forum in which general practitioners can report results of their research and give accounts of their experiences and their views. General practice is so wide that the problems facing an editor in providing the correct mixture of literary pabulum are bound to be difficult; fortunately, the wide range of interests of general practitioners has drawn to the editorial office interesting papers on most diverse subjects. Nevertheless, editorial responsibility only begins with the selection of suitable material for the *Journal*. The editor is responsible to the authors in ensuring that their material, on which they have probably spent many long hours of labour, shall be faithfully presented in the best possible dress.

In our view he should publish papers which, though original, may need some editorial tidying up. In his selection of papers for publication he must watch that the opinions and ideas in it are not too bizarre, and yet he must forever be on guard that he does not reject papers which contain statements with which he disagrees. Progress springs from new ideas, and editorial selection must never descend to censorship of the original.

To the editor's responsibilities to the author and to the reader must be added those of the organization for whom the editor is working. His journal must be economically viable. This does not necessarily imply that it must make a profit in cash. The prestige value of the journal which he edits may not be capable of measurement in terms

of pounds, shillings and pence, and this hidden value must be taken into account in assessing the benefits which the publication brings to the organization that it represents. To publish a journal is a business and the editor must have a fair knowledge of publishing as well as a nodding acquaintance with printing and a clear idea of editorial policy. To accomplish all this he must needs be surrounded by experts: specialists in the various departments. The editor and the Royal College have been fortunate in their advisers in the past. To them is owed a debt of gratitude.

With this issue the *Journal* is embarking on yet one more new era. In order to provide an even better service to our contributors and readers it will henceforth be published monthly. To spread the extra burden imposed by so doing, the College has secured the help and advice of the well-known publishers E. and S. Livingstone Limited of Edinburgh, who will publish the *Journal* on our behalf. We look forward to a happy and profitable association with them. Editorial management and policy will be unaltered: the Devonshire Press will continue to print the *Journal*, and the *Journal* office will remain in Dartmouth.

BINDING OF JOURNAL

The Devonshire Press Limited of Higher Fleet Street, Torquay, are prepared to bind volumes of the *Journal*. The cost of this service will depend on the demand but will not exceed 35s. 0d. per volume.

Members are asked to forward the index with the *Journals* they require to have bound.