

Introduction

In early 1974 the publishers of this journal realized that the second half of 1975 would bring the appearance of the 100th volume, and wished to mark the occasion. It was decided to commission articles for a special issue from about twenty distinguished organometallic chemists, and in May 1974 the members of the Editorial Board were asked to list the names of up to twenty people they considered most appropriate for inclusion, and also to indicate the ten they considered to be the most worthy. They were asked to base their choice only on the criterion of eminence, without concern for geographical distribution or the spread of coverage of the various fields of organometallic chemistry. From the thirty-three lists submitted, combined totals of "votes" were drawn up, and these, with decisions in a few marginal cases by casting "votes" of the five Regional Editors, produced the final list of invited authors. Most gratifyingly, not a single negative reply to the invitations was received, and furthermore, the nineteen articles in this issue were received in time for it to appear at the scheduled date.

The list of those invited to contribute must in itself be considered as of some historical significance, since it represents the combined judgement of thirty-three eminent organometallic chemists, drawn from eleven different countries, of those scientists considered most worthy of recognition in terms of their contributions to organometallic chemistry as judged in 1974, at the end of a quarter of a century which had seen such great developments in the field. While it is unlikely that "voting" by another set of thirty-three prominent organometallic chemists from around the world would produce an identical list, there can be little doubt that a high proportion of names would be common to both lists.

Each of the selected authors was invited to contribute an article on his "general field in interest, or some special topic within it, showing briefly how it developed, what stage it has reached, and preferably speculating briefly on the likely directions of future developments". In elaboration of this, each was left to decide "whether to try to survey the whole field of your contributions or to concentrate on some smaller part of it which you consider to be especially important at the present time". To allow each author the maximum opportunity for personal expression, no attempt was made to impose a uniformity in approach or even of format. A glance through the pages will suffice to show that this has led to a very wide range of presentation in both content and style. This is best illustrated by the contrast between the articles by fellow Nobel Laureates G. Wilkinson and E.O. Fischer. The former presents a highly personal account, of human and historical as well as scientific interest, of the circumstances surrounding his pioneering contributions to the chemistry of ferrocene, while the latter

gives a formal, detailed survey of a specific aspect of his current research which is showing especially rapid development and promise.

A brief explanation of two minor anomalies is called for. First, one paper appears in German, although it was intended that all would be in English, so that their contents would be most effectively accessible to the maximum number of chemists throughout the world, but Professor Fischer particularly wished that his article should appear in German. Second, it was intended that the articles would appear only under the names of the invited authors whose names had emerged from the selection procedure; eighteen of them complied with this, although some acknowledge the contributions of colleagues to the authorship of their articles, but Professor Fischer persisted in his request that his paper carry the name of a co-author, and in view of his special eminence in organometallic chemistry this was accepted.

My thanks and those of the Publishers are due to the Editorial Board, the other Regional Editors for their helpful cooperation, and especially to the invited authors for agreeing to contribute to this issue and for submitting their articles in time. The Publishers regard this issue as a special service to organometallic chemistry in recognition of the support given to the Journal in the twelve years of its existence by so many organometallic chemists throughout the world, which has led to its achieving the high reputation it undoubtedly enjoys.

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