

Editorial

Already it has become familiar — the bright red cover with bold black lettering — as it drops on bench or desk. The first copy of any new publication excites comment and study simply because it *is* new. By the fifth or sixth copy the novelty has worn off and the continued interest of the reader must be captured by the quality of the contents, not the originality of the cover. It is relatively easy, too, to produce a bumper first number; contributions are encouraged, even cajoled, from colleagues and planning can occupy many months. Once the excitement of the launch has passed the real work must begin.

So how do we stand, as the second year passes away? For a venture so young the answer must unequivocally be, remarkably soundly. Circulation is growing at an encouraging pace, the flow of contributions is increasing and many distinguished societies throughout the world that are concerned with pharmaceutical or biomedical analysis are negotiating advantageous subscription rates for their individual members. Another important feature of the service that the Journal offers is the publication of plenary and other important lectures given at symposia and conferences of note — those from the very successful international symposium on Drug Analysis held in Brussels have already appeared and an issue in 1984 carried the proceedings of the symposium on Liquid Chromatography in the Biomedical Sciences held in Ronneby, Sweden, last summer.

How has such a promising beginning been made and how can it be nurtured and extended? Primarily one must acknowledge the energy and the judgement of the Editors-in-Chief; the main driving force has necessarily come from them and their enthusiasm has flowed to others — the distinguished Regional Editors and the members of the Editorial Board. In this enthusiasm they have been supported and encouraged by the publisher's representatives. But the Journal would be nothing without a regular flow of papers of quality that will sustain and enlarge the good impressions created by the first few issues. It is heartening to know that such a flow is not only being maintained but that it is increasing. Of course, not all papers submitted are suitable for publication, either because they are judged to fall below the standards that are being set or because their subject matter is too remote from the aims and objectives of the Journal.

In this whole operation the key figures, however — the unsung heroes of any journal's success — are the referees. To maintain a large panel of knowledgeable workers, expert in their various fields, who are willing to devote their time and talents at quite short notice and entirely without reward, is a difficult task. The Journal is most fortunate in having established, in a relatively short time, such a panel of dedicated men and women. On the quality of their assessments and on the constructive nature of their comments the reputation of the Journal will rest.

Not all authors are happy to have their work constructively criticized by their peers and the referee may even be reviled for his observations. Mature authors, however, recognize the value of a fresh insight and an occasional correcting hand; the editors certainly recognize and welcome the symbiotic nature of the relationship between author and referee.

So it is to our willing band of referees that this short editorial is dedicated. The thanks of the Editorial Board go out to them — and the board members surely know what is involved for they are referees themselves — even the Chairman is not exempt!

C. A. Johnson
Chairman of the Editorial Board