

Foreword

This first issue of volume 11 of the *Journal of Biosocial Science* brings changes. Sir Alan Parkes has now retired from the editorship, and it is right to mark the occasion by expressing the great indebtedness to him not only of all readers of the journal but of all whose interests lie in biosocial science. Ten years ago in his foreword to the first issue, Sir Alan set out the aims of the new journal, 'a periodical to promote communication within the new and exciting field of exploration, the common ground between biology and the social sciences'. Pointing out that 'bio-social' carries the same implications for biology and social science as 'biomedical' does for biology and medicine, he noted 'We cannot give definition to biosocial science merely by putting papers on human biology within the same cover as papers dealing with the social sciences'. Instead, papers that are primarily biological should have obvious social implications, and those that are primarily social should have obvious biological undertones, besides those that are overtly of appeal to both. There is virtually no paper in the 350 articles that have been published that has not met these requirements.

Sir Alan has seen the new journal through its infancy and formative years, always a difficult period, and under his guidance it has developed its own personality. It has proved truly international, with a steady flow of papers from overseas and, particularly gratifying, from authors in the less developed countries where the abundant biological and social problems and patterns are so intricately interwoven. Secondly, while its topics have ranged widely, there are in retrospect several that have predominated. Especially important are the studies related to population control, the most critical problem facing mankind today; these have covered broad demography, particular demographic variables, the nature, effectiveness and cost of family planning programmes, the changing pattern of family planning, experience of family planning clinics in a variety of societies, and the characteristics of those who use them. As a second major topic, the effects of divisions of society (social classes, educational and economic groups, categories of intelligence or disability) have been explored widely, on fertility and survival, on the growth of children, on physique, on morphology. Population genetics has been reasonably represented, both at the descriptive and the analytical level, and so has the social impact of genetic disease. Nutrition and its effects on growth and physique, behaviour and performance; the biology of fertility and its control; historical biology, particularly of demography and genetic structure; intelligence, and the association of biological and social variables with it; mating patterns and migration; all these have received ample representation in successive issues. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it indicates the main areas that contributors regard as particularly within the province of biosocial science, and so by precept the journal has exerted considerable influence on the subject as a whole.

Besides the change of editorship, this issue brings others less important. There is the change of production method, which will help to keep down costs. The re-designed cover expresses the intention of the journal to look forward rather than backwards. But there will be continuity of aims, content and standard. For their help in maintaining this continuity, the new editor is very grateful to Mrs Herbertson and Mrs King who are responsible for the bulk of the day-to-day work behind the scenes; to Sir Alan who has generously offered to act as Consultant; and to the editorial advisory panel upon whose opinions and practical assistance so much depends.

D.F.R.