Editorial Preface

In the last decade we have witnessed a ‘knowledge explosion’ less threatening to mankind than the widely feared and publicized ‘population explosion’. Indeed a broad and judicious utilization of the new knowledge may represent the best means we have to counteract the frightening rate of growth of population. We in neurosurgery share in an especially crucial way the obligation to use modern physicochemical techniques and the best clinical methods to improve professional competence in our domain, because inadequate or tardy therapy of disease of the central nervous system may have such devastating consequences in terms of protracted invalidism, not to mention death.

Two decades of relative peace in the world have seen contributions to new knowledge of the nervous system and careful appraisals of the results of applying old knowledge coming in from many lands and in many languages. The complex armamentaria and the highly trained teams of clinicians and investigators are no longer the peculiar perquisites of a small number of centers in a few countries. The consequent flood of original reports relevant to neurosurgery in numerous tongues can no longer be read, much less critically appraised, by any one person. It is with a view to meeting this situation that we have decided to embark on the publication of ‘Progress in Neurological Surgery’ at the rate of one volume per year. Every book will consist of a relatively small number of chapters each sufficiently limited in scope to permit a comprehensive résumé of the worldwide publications therein. We shall seek as senior authors individuals with great personal experience in their topics and as well a substantial international scope in their professional friendship so that hopefully the chapter will give not only worldwide coverage of the subject, but in
addition a critical appraisal of the value of the various contributions, and, when possible, at least a tentative conclusion as to the merits of conflicting points of view. Not only clinical articles but also those dealing with expanding fields of pure research directly relevant to our problems will be included.

The editors have the benefit of thoughtful help as to topics and senior authors from an outstanding widespread group of neurosurgeons on the Advisory Board. We should like however to have advice on these two important aspects of our job from any member of the profession willing to give them his intelligent attention. It is our hope that the relevant chapter in a recent number of ‘Progress in Neurological Surgery’ will constitute one of the first points of reference to which a practicing neurosurgeon will turn for up-to-date information on the practical management of a problem, and that its references will give him a useful point of departure for further study should he so wish.

It was the initial thought of the Swiss and Italian editors that all contributions should be published in English and after substantial reflection we have all three agreed to this policy. The early predominance of the English language in contributions to neurological surgery, and the relative terseness and simplicity of this language have led us to this viewpoint. If this were to be the policy of the other largely international neurosurgical journals it would mean that many neurosurgeons would need learn but one other language than their native tongue in order to remain abreast of the field.

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