

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

As the end of the first decade of the Association's existence approaches, some members, especially those with early memories of its activities, must wonder if it is going to be possible to maintain the fraternal spirit.

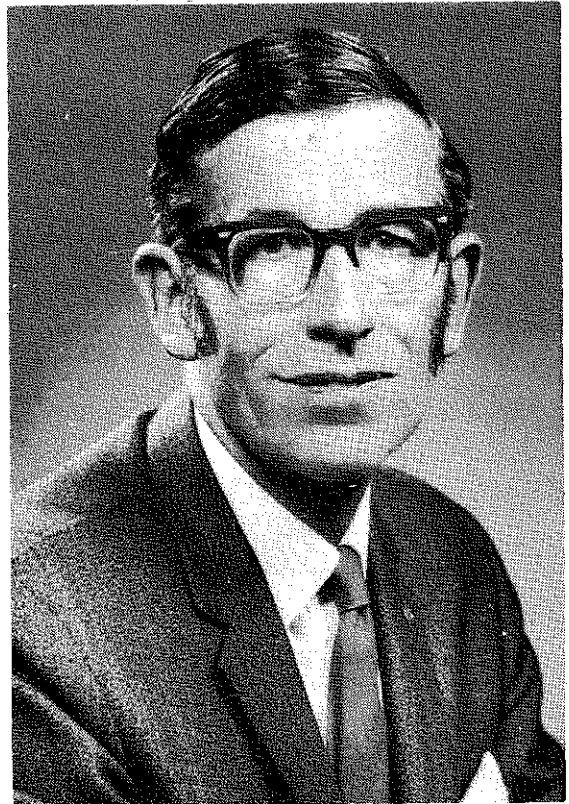
These lines are being written as the second of the National Secretaries passes on her responsible post in which she has shown a wonderful flair for maintaining personal links between members throughout the country; and it is also necessary to say farewell to the Editor of this journal who has given her time voluntarily over four years, and with her committee has conspicuously raised its professional and literary standard.

Few would deny that a feeling of togetherness is vital in a comparatively new organisation and that an emerging profession cannot expect to flourish without such a group entity. All gratitude then to the retiring national president and those men and women before him (not forgetting those who have worked hard at branch executive level) who clearly believed strongly that the position of the many New Zealanders needing assistance from the social services could be improved if an Association were brought into existence to guide its members in professional competence.

An independent observer of the intermingling at the 4th Biennial Conference made up of caseworkers at the grassroots level, university educators and agency administrators, might have pondered over what was the glue that held together these people of apparently widely different personal characteristics and approaches to their work. Bonds — if of an indefinable kind — there clearly were, and never more evident than when by an overwhelming vote it was resolved by conference to introduce new rates of annual subscription scaled to relate to members' widely differing incomes.

Those present who attended the inaugural Auckland Conference in 1954, when fire in the belly — to use Professor Robb's term — was not lacking, must have had memories evoked of an earlier display of concern, indeed determination, that the Association should serve the interests jointly of members from both the voluntary and the government agencies. It is a matter of honourable record that members "instructed" the executive, due to be elected the following day, to urge Government to open the doors of Tiromoana to social workers whether government employed or not, and this in the teeth of opposition from the State Services Commission representative taking part in the debate. The same sincerity of purpose and moral courage was shown that night as eight years later characterised the actions of the committee which prepared the "Welfare at the Crossroads" report.

With this background, seemingly different from that of the British Association of Social Workers, which has no such even balance of statutory and non-statutory membership, new entrants who joined at an unprecedented rate in 1971 can expect a high degree of encouragement and understanding from colleagues within the Association. The intimacy of earlier years may be less apparent but growth



JOHN FRY

and the need to cope with ever-changing situations are challenges the Association's membership should be able to take in its stride provided the national and branch office bearers, executive officers and leaders of interest groups and the all important standing committees preserve their sense of good purpose and can provide the support which any sound professional body offers its members.

In the 1960s a sense of mutual aid and interdependence was important to a proportion of members in some isolation in the voluntary agencies who were wanting strong backing to convince employing committees and others of the need for training and recognition of standards; but in the immediate future such support, with the setting up of the Department of Social Welfare, could be of even more importance — only time will tell — to a quite different group of members. Colleagues in the Child Welfare Division and Social Security Department are being faced with what Kay Richards ("Social Work Today", 8th April 1971) terms the need to tolerate uncertainty. Following last year's start on the integrating and developing of comprehensive social services in England it became clear that workers at all levels "experienced acute uncertainty, wondering how they could cope with unfamiliar problems, new colleagues with differing standards, a new head of department or supervisor, and new administrative procedures." On the other side of the coin, there are substantial grounds for hoping the appointment of Mr I. J. D. MacKay as first Director-General of the new department is a felicitous decision which could pave the way for the imaginative planning and flexible development the Association has ardently advocated.

We are aware that psychiatric and medical social workers in New Zealand face the inevitable stress of new situations; planners of branch programmes may consider providing opportunities for discussion of how changes in roles and duties personally affect members, especially those in their middle or later years of service.

Social workers outside the fields mentioned may be facing dilemmas of another kind if trends elsewhere are a guide. They may find difficulty in accepting as an aid to professional casework the harnessing of resources from within the community in ways unthought of a decade ago. For almost half a century alcoholics have been helping to restore other alcoholics, but we now have ex-delinquents used in rehabilitation programmes with other offenders, housewives being trained as mother counsellors and students being used in therapeutic work with other young people.

We look forward to the impetus which the Association and profession can expect from the younger social worker joining our ranks. New training programmes are being

developed as a result of demands both from the agencies and from within the community. It is to be hoped that those who have been in the field for some years will be prepared to make good use of the stimulus this new potential will offer.

Most readers will be aware by now of the views vigorously expressed by some workers overseas, that Social Services should function to change society and not to maintain it, and that the consumer should move into decision-making at neighbourhood, and at local and central government level.

While matters of this nature will undoubtedly concern us and debate will continue in the background, our first task as members will be to see that services to the client are maintained without interruption at the highest level. Anyone may hazard a prediction as to what the next two years will hold—a period of momentous change or synthesis—but whatever is put on our plate, we as your new executive will, in good faith, do all we can to represent your interests strongly.

J. R. L. FRY



A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON JOHN FRY

John Fry brings to the position of National President seventeen years' full-time experience gained from field and residential work carried out in both voluntary and statutory agencies. He gained the Diploma of Social Science, Victoria University, in 1954, then joined the Child Welfare Division. He was on the staff of the Austin Street Boys' Home, Wellington, then relieved at the Boys' Home, Auckland. He was subsequently a Senior Boys Welfare Officer at the Auckland District Office.

In 1961 John was appointed as the first D.C.W.O., Whakatane and spent 5½ years in this position. He then moved to the South Is. to develop the work of the Anglican Social Services in South Canterbury, opening an office in Timaru. This entailed mainly family and geriatric casework.

Over the last few years he has been associated with the formation of the Timaru Association for Social Service (secretary) and in the promotion of social research on a local basis, into problems of geriatric care.

N.Z.A.S.W.

He has been active in Association affairs from the start and while in the Bay of Plenty was a delegate to National Council. For the last two years he has been a member of the Canterbury Branch Executive, representing South Canterbury members.

SPORT

Ex Rower, Ex Walker, Failed Fisherman.

LIFE-LONG INTERESTS

Ships and the sea have been an interest from boyhood days. When a young man he saw war and peacetime service in the Mercantile Marine and has done voluntary and paid seamen's welfare work in both New Zealand and the United Kingdom. He enjoys an occasional evening's relaxation in the S.C. Seafarers' Recreation Centre as a committee member.

ALLIED ACTIVITIES

John has held office in various organisations including I.H.C., Epilepsy Association and Outward Bound.

WIFE AND FAMILY

Ruth Fry has had considerable experience in education and is at present part-time teaching in a Catholic Secondary School. She shares her husband's interest in Marriage Guidance work and has served as chairman of the local council's education committee and has been closely connected with the training of tutors. Husband and wife have taken part jointly in discussion sessions in family life programmes in secondary schools.

John and Ruth have three children, aged 13, 12 and 10 years.

