deal with areas of cell biology or biochemical physiology which have no obvious relevance to either environmental or sensory aspects.

All the papers are in English and seem of a good standard, and the editorial board is drawn from nine countries. The production is of the high quality we expect from Springer. Promised publication time is about six months, but as the papers do not carry acceptance dates one cannot see how often this aim is fulfilled. There is a comprehensive and valuable book review section (and also a long list of books received) in three of the four numbers.

Zoological Science has been born of the marriage between the two official journals of the Zoological Society of Japan: *Zoological Magazine*, which was published in

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Japanese and first appeared in 1888, and *Annotationes Zoologicae Japonenses*, which started nine years later and carried papers in Western languages but had rather a limited distribution. Volume 1 of *Zoological Science* appeared in 1984, with six bimonthly numbers amounting to over a thousand pages. (This is more than three times the size of *Experimental Biology* at less than three times the price.)

The new journal is an attempt to bring Japanese zoological research before a wider international audience, and it certainly deserves to succeed in this. All the papers are by Japanese but all are in English, and a wide yet well-focused view of Japanese zoology emerges. Each issue available to me contains two reviews and 15 or more original papers (some being short communications). These are conveniently grouped on the contents page in subject areas: physiology, cell biology, biochemistry, genetics, developmental biology, endocrinology, behaviour, taxonomy. The quality of the papers is high and the production excellent. One of the numbers of Vol. 1 is devoted to several hundred very short abstracts of the papers presented at the annual meeting of the Zoological Society of Japan, and this is to become the standard practice.

In short, I have reservations about *Experimental Biology*, which has not yet developed the distinctive flavour it is seeking. On the other hand, it is clear from the outset that *Zoological Science* will prove an extremely valuable addition to our libraries. □

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Journal prices

Details of editors and frequency of publication, and the subscription rates appearing at the top of each review, are given in most instances for 1986. This information is not complete in all cases, and readers interested in subscribing to a particular journal should check the rates with the publisher concerned.

Little considerations

Keith Dumbell & Denise Roditi

Microbiological Sciences. Editor-in-chief C. M. Brown. Blackwell Scientific. 12/yr. UK £110 (institutional), £37 (individual); North America \$145 (institutional), \$45 (individual).

The Antimicrobial Newsletter. Editor Daniel Amsterdam. Elsevier, New York. 12/yr. North America \$55, elsewhere \$76.

Microbiological Sciences has been published monthly since April 1984 under the auspices of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS), whose newsletter it has supplanted. IUMS represents 80 societies in 57 countries and therefore caters for the needs of microbiologists practising in advanced and developing countries, in all branches of the science. The journal is intended to be affordable and widely read, and help microbiologists to keep aware of progress in

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the too easily separable branches of their subject. Broadly, then, it aims to do for microbiological scientists much what *Nature* and *Science* do for scientists in general.

Each issue carries four or five review articles on specific topics, a series of brief notes, book reviews and a calendar of forthcoming meetings. Most issues also have a centre-page chart, diagrammatically summarizing things such as the genetic map of *B. subtilis* or the structure and properties of immunoglobulins.

There is, it seems to us, a basic flaw in this approach. Microbiology is not a self-contained science, and its knowledge base and specific methodology account for only a part, often a small part, of the microbiologist's needs. Those microbiologists engaged in medicine, industry and agriculture may be more interested in keeping abreast of developments in biochemistry, genetics, pathology or botany than in progress in branches of microbiology other than their own. Should the need arise to consult a review on viroids or yeast genetics or crown gall bacteria, there are specialist journals where articles of this sort can be found. *Microbiological Sciences* is too slim to serve as an overall reference source, and while many good reviews have appeared, too high a proportion of them concentrate on extending the reader's stock of facts. Surely it would be better, in a journal such as this, to adopt a more synthetic approach, with the main emphasis on conceptual and methodological innovations?

There is no doubt that IUMS needs a forum for communication and the editors of *Microbiological Sciences* have prom-

ised to react to feedback from readers. Although the early issues have been too ambitious there is hope that this young journal will settle down to a more realistic and useful *modus operandi*.

The *Antimicrobial Newsletter*, by contrast, is produced for a clearly defined and more limited readership among laboratory workers and physicians whose concern is with infectious disease. Even in this much narrower context there is still an abundance of data to be digested and a plethora of publications to be scanned, so it is cheering to find a well-written journal that provides concise reviews on the subject. The presentation is enhanced by useful tables, clear diagrams and comprehensive references, although sometimes it could be improved by short editorial comment to resolve apparent discrepancies.

Each slim, seven-page issue contains one major article and up to two shorter pieces. For this the cost may seem excessive, but it is refreshing to be able to pick up a small journal and add so quickly and painlessly to one's knowledge. The pleasure is partly due to the absence of advertising — not a bad thing, considering the subject matter, and worth paying that little extra to enjoy. *Antimicrobial Newsletter* will be a welcome addition to any clinical microbiologist's library. □

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