



The G.M.S. Committee unanimously recommended Sir Ronald Gibson (Winchester) and Dr. R. B. L. Ridge (Enfield) as candidates for the election to fill the two seats for representatives of general practitioners in England on the G.M.C.

Dr. Keable-Elliott said that the Committee's General Purposes Subcommittee had thought that there might be direct interference by the Department in the presentation of drugs and, possibly later, in the dispensing of drugs, and that there would be an indirect effect on medical journals.

Dr. J. H. Marks said it was apparent that the drug industry believed that it obtained value for the money spent on representatives. The industry would cut back on advertising in medical journals before making representatives redundant. Reputable journals would suffer, which was not in the interests of the profession.

Dr. B. D. Morgan Williams suggested that the Committee's advice to Dr. David Owen should be to concentrate on ensuring that teachers in the medical profession taught medical students not to read advertisements.

Dr. H. C. Faulkner said that in central London general practitioners received a steady stream of invitations to lunches, dinners, and so on from drug companies, and in his view it was a highly irrelevant method of giving a responsible profession technical information about drugs. The time had come, he suggested, when general practitioners should say that was not the way they wanted information about new drugs and new developments in treatment.

IRON HAND

Dr. G. W. Taylor said that a Government clamp down was a bad way of dealing with the problem. What was needed was education of the doctors and not another iron hand of State control.

Pointing out that as an independent contractor his relationship with drug companies was his own business, Dr. Ball said he had no unsolicited material through his letterbox. There was no excuse for slating drug companies on that account, and the representative who came to see him did so on a strictly rationed basis.

Dr. B. L. Alexander said that he deplored the fact that the Department wished to monitor advertisements, and Dr. J. C. Cameron paid tribute to the A.B.P.I. for its efforts to improve its own code of advertising and for the money it had given for the advancement of the profession, particularly in education. He suggested that the Committee should see that all avenues of information were available to general practitioners in an acceptable form.

The right thing would be to open discussions with the Department, declared Dr. D. R. Cook. Doctors should recognize frankly that there were elements in promotional activity of some drug firms which were not in the best interests either of the pharmaceutical industry or the medical profession. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that restrictions which were imposed were not so onerous as to prevent pharmaceutical firms

engaging in those side activities which were of great advantage to the profession.

Dr. D. L. Williams argued that a case for anything other than a free enterprise industry had not been made out. The Committee should support the idea that postal advertising was excessive. But if drug firms withdrew their sponsorship from many of the medical educational activities would the Department be prepared to make funds available to replace that sponsorship? The Committee should also question the competence of the Department to monitor, he added.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health stating that it approved of the code of practice of the A.B.P.I., and that it did not see an immediate need for any alteration. If the Department wished to introduce any change the G.M.S. Committee would like to have an opportunity of discussing it in advance.

Review Body Award

The Committee received with satisfaction a number of letters from local medical committees expressing thanks and appreciation for the work of those who were responsible for the presentation of the profession's case to the Review Body, and of the actions of the negotiators which resulted in a satisfactory award being accepted by the Government.

Final Review of S.H.M.O.s

The Department of Health and Social Security has issued the following information about the regrading of senior hospital medical officers and senior hospital dental officers:

(1) Following representations from the professions the Department of Health and Social Security and the Welsh Office have agreed that there should be a final central review of the personal status of S.H.M.O.s and S.H.D.O.s who were not eligible for the 1972-3 review.

(2) Those eligible will be S.H.M.O.s and S.H.D.O.s who were under the age of 65 and in N.H.S. employment at 1 January 1975 and who were not eligible for the 1972-3 review which related to S.H.M.O.s and S.H.D.O.s occupying posts graded as consultant and receiving a special allowance.

(3) S.H.M.O.s and S.H.D.O.s who are eligible will be invited to apply for review to the Department of Health and Social Security or to the Welsh Office. Applications will be considered by a central review panel the members of which will be entirely professional. The panel will consist of two representatives of the Health Department, two of the Joint Consultants Committee, one outside assessor (normally from the appropriate royal college or faculty) and one representative of the appropriate R.H.A. or A.H.A.(T.) or A.H.A. in Wales.

(4) Any practitioner who considers himself eligible for this review and who has not received or does not shortly receive an application form should apply for one to his employing authority.

(5) The closing date for applications is the 15 August 1975. The decisions of the review panel will be final; there will be no right of appeal and no further reviews will be arranged in the future.

Corrections

Medical Teachers' and Research Workers' Committee

In the Association Notice on the Full-time Medical Teachers' and Research Workers' Committee (28 June, p. 766) the first word of the second line should read "non-professional." In the penultimate paragraph the following words apply to the three preceding sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c)—"are eligible to nominate and vote in one of these elections. Retiring members are eligible for re-election." We apologize for these errors.