

G. I. Watson, Foundation Councillor, Director of the Epidemic Observation Unit and President 1970–72.

These and many more wrote what mattered when it mattered most. A selection of their letters is republished today and we thank all concerned for permission to reprint.

It is sometimes said that writing letters for publication is a waste of time; that letters to editors may stimulate a passing thought and then are lost for ever; that major policy is decided in closed committees, not open to the rank and file.

These letters disprove this thesis. They show that if enough people care and take the trouble to write then collective action is possible. These letters encouraged the Steering Committee who wrote (we) “are assured of loyal and active support from many quarters”. They also changed the name of the College and proved an indication not only of the strength but of the sources of support. This correspondence was crucial.

REFERENCE

British Medical Journal (1952). College of General Practitioners—Report of the Steering Committee, 2, 1327.

Dr G. I. WATSON

DR. G. I. WATSON ends this month a two-year term as President of the College. He has achieved much in many ways, particularly through his clinical work, his travelling, and his personality.

Throughout his term of office he has been, and has been seen to be, a practising clinician and is well-known as an authority on virus diseases. He has made a unique contribution in creating and developing the Epidemic Observation Unit which was historically the very first research unit of the College. It was Dr Watson who pioneered the first major multi-practice research project on the management of measles which arose directly from his Sir Charles Hastings prize essay. He was, later, the first ever to win the Hastings prize twice.

Secondly, by his travelling he has knitted the College together, by visiting many of the far-flung units. In New Zealand this autumn he completed the noteworthy achievement of having attended all the Regional Councils of the College in person.

His personality has ensured a successful presidency. He has contributed a characteristic dignity—few who heard it will ever forget his speech for the College at the 1971 council dinner.

Dr Watson faced the personal challenge of succeeding John Hunt and being succeeded in turn by Prince Philip, he has, however, ensured by his own individual style that his, the seventh presidency, was no *interregnum*, but will be seen as a further significant step in the development of the office. The College is fortunate that he is continuing to serve during the next year in the new post of deputy President.

ONE HUNDRED UP!

THIS month the hundredth notification form is bound into the pages at the back of the *Journal*. The first one appeared in the issue of February 1958, which itself was the first on whose cover the word *Journal* as well as *Research Newsletter* No. 18