

the initiative provided by Dr Irvine (*August Journal*, p. 521) to put a higher priority on management, but will unfortunately suffer from the hostility towards College activities prevalent amongst many general practitioners.

Now that training is compulsory, I suggest that this is where the main change should take place—and trainees should be offered effective training in management skills and techniques as part of their courses. Before that, however, the course organizers and trainers should be made aware of the advantages of such methods. The King's Fund, for example ran a course on management education for general practitioner course organizers in November 1983. Course organizers and trainers should be strongly encour-

aged to attend such a course, for otherwise this important part of training for general practice will go by default, simply because the training elite have had no experience of it themselves. The cynics would indeed be right when they comment . . . 'but who will train the trainers?'

There is a wealth of expertise in management education outside our own profession. I suggest that we should make use of these professionals to introduce business management training into our training schemes. This would not of course provide a direct incentive to established principals to learn and use such techniques, but would at least ensure that this increasingly important component of our work is added to the training of future general practitioners.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Association for Medical Education in Europe

The annual conference held in Prague from 14-16 September 1983—a report by Dr John Bennisson

Charles IV—King of Bohemia and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire issued a Golden Bull in 1348—'the faithful subjects of our realm, who hunger unceasingly for the fruits of knowledge should not be forced to beg of others, but should find a table prepared for them in our country. They should not have to satisfy their desires by begging in foreign lands, but should deem it glorious to invite foreigners to come to participate in the sweetness of such a grateful savour.'

THE result was Charles University in Prague, where over 600 years later this year met over 200 delegates from six Socialist countries, every country in Europe and several from further afield—including Japan. This was the Annual Conference of AMEE, sponsored this year by WHO, the Czechoslovak Medical Society J. E. Purkyně and the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in the Karolinum.

The theme was the changing needs in the medical curriculum for a changing world, where the challenge now is: 'to prepare the minds of future doctors for a concern with health as well as illness, a capacity to change and a readiness for adaptation to the modifications which will inevitably become required during the course of professional work.'

Does the basic doctor really need three years' postgraduate training to become a general practitioner after five or six years in medical school? If so—which countries can afford what to others would seem a luxury? Might it not be better to restructure the curriculum? In this instance we heard about Beersheba.

As always the impressive strides forward made by several of our neighbours should give us pause for thought. I saw no UK undergraduate Dean at any of the meetings—though Cambridge had registered, Cork and Dublin were active and Professor Parkhouse from Newcastle ably led one of the sessions. Professor Henry Walton, of course—President of AMEE and now President and Executive Director of the World Federation for Medical Education steered the whole conference with his customary urbanity. David Metcalfe gave the last paper with increasing authority.

A noteworthy feature was the lively presence of students from the International Federation of Medical Student Associations particularly in the session devoted to the means of changing their curriculum. They felt strongly: sadly only Holland, Sweden and Switzerland were represented here together with a quartet from Prague itself.

Socially, our hosts displayed their musical and architectural heritage with a buffet supper serenaded by a high school choir outside in the grounds of a former convent,

now an art gallery, as the peak for this correspondent; though this was challenged by Czech baroque organ and brass in a baroque church of considerable splendour.

It was difficult to escape the political facts, but individually our Czech hosts could not have been more welcoming, and it is to be hoped that international conferences of this sort will help to draw aside the curtain that divides some of us.

I hope to see you next year in Oslo.



The city of Prague