

innocently named law on infant and maternal health care. Responses are awaited.

The *Report of the Confidential Inquiry into Homicides and Suicides by Mentally Ill People* has been published and we thank Dr W. Boyd for his efforts as the first director. After a recent tendering exercise the future of the Inquiry has been established and will be run by the new director Dr Louis Appleby from Manchester University.

Matters arising

The President reported that Council was currently considering the document on the *Role and Responsibilities of the Consultant*. This was expected to be available following the March meeting of Council.

The President referred to the current widespread concern over psychiatric staffing levels. This had led to discussion with the Department of Health about possible solutions.

The President discussed the serious concerns about the implementation of the Care in the Community programme and its effect both on patients and the morale of psychiatrists. The President reported that the College had recently received a resolution from Dr Hollander, seconded by Professor Hirsch, which had not been received in time for formal consideration by the Meeting. Dr Hollander was invited to read the Resolution to the Meeting prior to it being submitted to Council on 29th January 1996. This draft Resolution had been discussed by the Executive and Finance Committee the previous week and it had been agreed that the President should write to the Secretary of State for Health stating that the College would be putting forward certain proposals to the Annual General Meeting.

Comments on the Resolution were invited from the Meeting which would be taken into consideration in preparing the final draft.

Response from the Secretary of State to the President

Following the letter from Dr Caldicott to Mr Dorrell (*Psychiatric Bulletin*, May 1996, 20, 315) the following response was received:

Dear Dr Caldicott: I recognise the concerns you express about the implementation of comprehensive mental health services. As you know, I am conscious of the pressures on mental health services and it was for this reason that I set in train the review started by Gerry Malone's letter to health authorities last August. I announced the conclusions of that exercise last week, and set

out a programme of action including extra funding and close monitoring of progress.

I hope that this will have gone some way to address the issues you raised. However, I am well aware that we are not going to resolve all our problems overnight, and there is much still to be done. One of the key issues in this will be planning of the workforce, and I am pleased that my Department is working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists on this.

If you feel that a meeting would be useful, I would be glad to see you.

STEPHEN DORRELL