

illness and the local mental handicap hospital; he had been a patient at Rampton for seven years and two years ago had been recommended for transfer to a conventional hospital; but neither of the two local hospitals would agree to accept him. There was a conflict of opinion between consultants at the three hospitals, and also among other consultants who had been called in. But, in addition, there was a 'blanket ban' on patients from Special Hospitals imposed by

staff at one of the local hospitals concerned, and also at others. The Minister regarded this as 'unfortunate and misconceived' but could not see any way of overcoming the obstacles other than by continuing efforts at persuasion. He added, however, that many Special Hospital patients were being transferred without any problem arising.

ALEXANDER WALK

DISTINCTION AWARDS: A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

For several years now the College, through two Special Committees, has made recommendations to the Distinction Awards Committee, and it is believed that this has been a very useful exercise. However, it is felt that there are misunderstandings and a lack of information, and I have been asked to clarify the position.

On a national basis the Distinction Awards Committee, currently chaired by Sir Stanley Clayton, receives advice from National Advisers in a specialty, of which there are two or three; Regional Advisers appointed by the Chairman of the Distinction Awards Committee, in consultation with the appropriate College, to advise the Committee on A, B or C Awards; and local C Award Committees quite independent of the Colleges, which consider C Awards. More recently, Sir Stanley Clayton has introduced new Regional Higher Awards Committees for A and B Awards. Members are appointed to these by invitation. The Distinction Awards Committee also receives unsolicited advice from a number of sources.

The College sends advice direct to the Distinction Awards Committee through its two Special Committees, the one advising on C Awards, and the other on A and B Awards. The Senior Officers of the College, the Chairmen of the Specialist Sections or the highest award holders in each specialty, and the National Advisers serve on the Special Committee which makes recommendations for A and B Awards. The membership of the C Awards Committee of the College includes the Senior Officers, the Chairmen of the Divisions and Specialist Sections and Groups,

and the Regional Advisers to the Distinction Awards Committee. Sections or Divisions of the College are free to send advance proposals to either Special Committee. Before the Special Committees meet, lists of non-award holders are sent confidentially to all members so that they may consider them and take informal advice from their colleagues beforehand; because of the seal of confidentiality, lists of award holders cannot be made available before the meetings. Members of the Committees can only advise on awards not higher than their own, and at certain stages during the Committee proceedings some members may be required to withdraw.

Following the meetings of the College Special Committees, usually in July, citations are collected for all the names that are to be put forward, and these are sent to the Chairman of the Distinction Awards Committee as soon as they are available.

We believe that the College's involvement in making recommendations for Distinction Awards has been beneficial to the specialty, and that the position has improved since we have been doing this.

Any consultant who wishes to do so may send details of his own career direct to the Chairman of the Distinction Awards Committee, and if he has already done this he may update it by sending further particulars to that Committee. Details about one's own standing in relation to Distinction Awards should not be sent direct to the College.

W. LINFORD REES

President