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LORD HUNT'S LEGACY

Unlike John Prescott, most people in pharmacy circles know who Lord Hunt is. Those who have had any dealings with Government ministers in recent years have few doubts about the contribution that Lord Hunt has made to putting pharmacy on the National Health Service agenda. After his decision to resign earlier in the week over the Government's stance on Iraq, we can only hope that another champion be found for all the less high-profile issues in health that he has adopted.

It was Lord Hunt who launched the pharmacy plan for England at the British Pharmaceutical Conference in Birmingham in 2000 and who pointed out that there was so much potential to be tapped in pharmacy: "In the new NHS," he declared, "pharmacists will spend more time focusing on the clinical needs of individual patients and helping them get the most out of their medicines. As barriers are broken down throughout the NHS, they will find themselves working more flexibly alongside other professionals."

It is a vision that is still in the future but it is becoming a reality for many pharmacists as medicines management projects, local pharmaceutical services, repeat dispensing pilots and supplementary prescribing get off the ground. In pharmacy, Lord Hunt will be remembered long after John Prescott has left the political scene.

INTEREST WANING

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Council agreed in 1993 to form the Community Pharmacists Group in response to "a clear desire for it among community pharmacists". At the time, not everyone believed that such a group was necessary because it was thought that community pharmacy matters were already well represented to the Council (*Pfj*, 14 August 1993, p218).

In the inaugural group committee election in 1994, 24 candidates stood for seven places on the group's committee. In 1997, when these places became vacant, five members stood. Again, in 2000, five members stood. Now this year, in only the fourth committee election in the group's history, just four of the group's members — and there are nearly 9,000 of them — have put themselves forward and the result is that the election has again had to be cancelled (see p417).

Interest in the group's leadership is clearly waning. Were the doubters right? Might it be time to disband?