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NEW STYLE FOR THE PRESIDENT

Dr Gillian Hawksworth, recently elected President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, has put her head above the parapet. In a striking article published in this issue of *The Journal* (p871), she states that she is already quite clear what she wishes her legacy to the profession to be. "I intend my time as President to be looked back upon as a time when people knew they could speak and be properly listened to." We will have to wait for two years at least for the verdict to be given.

Some members of the Society will have sympathy with members of Parliament, increasingly frustrated by what they see as Tony Blair's style of leadership: do it first, explain afterwards. The best example of this is being played out before our eyes and ears this week, as the Prime Minister has had to defend himself against opposition charges that he "ripped up the constitution in a matter of hours" in last week's controversial cabinet reshuffle.

According to BBC online: "The Prime Minister told MPs the shake-up represented 'essential acts of constitutional modernisation' which would eventually be welcomed."

The BBC goes on: "In a Commons statement to MPs, he promised there would be 'extensive consultation' about the changes that ushered in a new constitutional affairs department. The plans will be published within the next few weeks, with parliamentary legislation to follow, he said.

"Earlier, Home Secretary David Blunkett, admitted that the presentation of the changes had not been handled well although he defended the principle behind the reforms. 'If you ask me was the presentation as good as we would have wished, the answer is no,' he said."

Change a few words and expressions and rename the dramatis personae, and the quotation reflects surprisingly accurately how some members think the Society's modernisation programme has so far been conducted. So they should welcome Dr Hawksworth's sentiments and take note that she seems to be sincere in her intentions. As she points out later in her article, the Council has been acting in good faith over the past two years and will continue to act in what it sees as the profession's best interests.

Nevertheless, just because a particular view is heard does not necessarily mean that it will be acted upon. Tony and Gillian have a similar job on their hands — restoring the confidence of their electorate.