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BMJ EDITOR'S CHOICE

With all the self agonising about Britain's colonial past we tend to forget the legacy of free speech and investigative journalism in some of the now independent countries. Nowhere is this more vivid than in the world's largest democracy, India, and at p 117 are summarised the full and frank findings of a government investigation into deaths from contaminated glycerol in JJ Hospital, Bombay. "There is much that is rotten in our [Indian] system of institutional medical care," Pandya concludes. And who would have predicted any correspondence at all, let alone three letters, aroused by a recent "For debate"

feature on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (p 133)? Fortunately it seems that the new regulations will cut down the already remote risk (of a very nasty disease) even further. At the end of the week celebrating the 40th anniversary of the NHS Sir George Godber, a great if not the greatest chief medical officer, returns to showing how much more generously the north of the border has been treated compared with the south. "There are good reasons why Scotland should have been given more in the early years," he emphasises (p 132), "but they do not justify pushing England even farther behind."