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BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TAVISTOCK SQUARE LONDON WC1H 9JR

ISSN 0267-0623

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Sexual abuse of children inevitably dominates this week's journal as last week saw the publication of the Butler-Sloss report (summarised on p 190) into the spate of diagnoses of sexual abuse in Cleveland. Bernard Valman, reacting to the report on p 151, concludes that Lord Justice Butler-Sloss has done a brilliant job and describes the advice on dealing with sexual abuse that has been sent to all doctors as "clear, specific, and wise." Clare Dyer looks at the legal implications (p 157), while on p 233 Harvey Marcovitch examines the media's part in the Cleveland affair and suggests that it reflects the confusion that we all feel about sexual abuse of children. The publication by the Today newspaper of a picture of a smiling Dr Marietta Higgs, one of the paediatricians at the centre of the affair, together with a headline

saying "Condemn This Laughing Cavalier" seemed particularly offensive and unhelpful. Another expanding social evil affecting children is homelessness, and a report on p 159 examines how living in bed and breakfast accommodation damages child health. On p 234 one of our new columnists, Louis Appleby, describes an evening in a Salvation Army hostel for the homeless and finds himself much more in sympathy with the Salvationists than was George Orwell. Saying of the week must go to Sir Douglas Black, who retired from his post as chairman of the BMA's board of science and education at last week's annual representative meeting. Thanking the meeting for a f standing ovation (p 227), he observed that although medicopolitics is said to make young men old it also makes old men feel young.

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