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1350 **Minerva**

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

What will our descendants make of the system in 1990, "unacceptable" to parents, house officers, and consultants, whereby in a university paediatric hospital a single senior house officer on call covers four medical wards, an intensive care unit (a total of 100 beds), and a medical casualty department and deals with all medical emergency admissions? (There are no junior house officers and the registrars are on call from home) (p 1342). Yet all this is taking place in a region that is already facing death from 1000 cuts (p 1293). No wonder that in his recent Rock Carling lecture Gordon

McLachlan, that Diaghilev of health service policy, spoke of the strong vocational element motivating those directly concerned with the NHS (p 1283). And nowhere is such an element more clearly seen than in hospice care, from which psychogeriatric practice can learn a lot (p 1321). Finally, there's a message not to ignore the role of alcohol in precipitating seizures in people presenting to the accident and emergency department (p 1341)—yet another manifestation to be added to the scary picture illustrating Minerva's column this week (p 1350).