

### DENTAL BILL

#### CASE FOR OPERATIVE ASSISTANTS

To the Editor  
 Sir—Two of the dentists who have rushed into print have given the public a totally wrong impression of the main purpose of Mr. Tassie's Bill. Both Dr. Moore (president of the Dental Association) and Dr. J. L. Eustace ignore the fact that the 1917 Act allows each registered dentist to employ two unregistered (and may be unqualified) operative assistants to do all the work of dentistry. The 1917 Act gives these operatives the status of dentists in the full sense of the word, excepting that they cannot legally practice on their own. The fact that dentists can go on training and employing unqualified assistants is a distinct menace to the public, and undermines the objects for which the Faculty of Dentistry and the Dental Hospital were established. Mr. Tassie's Bill definitely ends that system, and thus brings dentistry in this State into line with dentistry in other countries.

Drs. Moore and Eustace say, in effect, that the abolition of unregistered operative assistants is a retrograde step, and reinforce their statement by the backing of the B.M.A. and the University. It is obvious that neither the B.M.A. nor the University has had the facts explained to them. In this respect, the following statement by Dr. P. R. Newling is significant:—"Would the British Medical Association," he asks, "tolerate a Medical Act which permitted each registered practitioner to employ two unqualified persons? Would the public tolerate it? Would the public tolerate unqualified assistants in certain large practices if they knew?"

The attitude taken up by Drs. Moore and Eustace is even more surprising in view of the fact that six months ago they conducted a secret ballot of the 120 members of the Dental Association on the question of the abolition of unregistered operative assistants. The result of that plebiscite was that 55 dentists voted in favor of the abolition of operatives and 45 against. Here was a clear mandate, not only to the Dental Association, but also to Parliament, to do something.

What is to become of the experienced operators now employed if the law forbids the employment of unregistered assistants as Mr. Tassie's Bill proposes? They have had from eight to 20 years' practical experience. The Bill provides for their registration after an adequate examination. Dr. Moore says the registration of operatives as qualified dentists would be a real menace to graduates because it would lower the status of dentistry. That is humbug. Operatives are already permitted by the 1917 Act to do all the work of dentistry. The real menace lies in the fact that dentists can go on training unqualified assistants when that training should be the sole prerogative of the Faculty of Dentistry and the Dental Hospital. From that scandalous position there can be no escape. It is a danger to the public.—I am, Sir, &c.,

F. S. ALFORD.  
 For the Operative Dental Assistants' Association.

Adv. 28-10-30

#### Pharmacy Course

From "Too High Fees":—The cost to a student to do the pharmacy course at the University is too heavy. The fees are £20 a year for four years, and now the board requires £3 3/ entrance fee for the examination. These fees are out of proportion to those charged by the University for other courses, and in no other course is an examination fee charged. It is almost impossible now for a person of ordinary means to do the pharmacy course.

News 28-10-30

#### TALK ON SUBSIDIES

##### Visit by Prof. Giblin

Prof. L. F. Giblin, M.A. (Ritchie professor of economics at the University of Melbourne) will give a lecture in the physics lecture theatre at Adelaide University on Friday night, November 7. His subject will be "Subsidies to Production." His visit has been arranged by the South Australian branch of the Economic Society of Australia and New Zealand.

Prof. Giblin will be remembered for his interesting and instructive series of "Lectures to John Smith" which appeared in "The News."

Tickets for the lecture may be obtained at 1/ each from Preece's or from Mr. V. A. Edgemoor (honorary secretary) at the University.

### DENTAL BILL

#### CASE FOR OPERATIVES

##### Mr. Alford Replies to Dr. Moore

Mr. F. S. Alford, on behalf of the Operative Dental Assistants' Association, today replied to criticisms by Dr. A. R. P. Moore (president of the South Australian branch of the Australian Dental Association) on the Dental Amendment Bill now before the Legislative Council.

"The assertion by Dr. Moore that I am a dental assistant is not correct," stated Mr. Alford. "I have no axe to grind. Two years ago I examined the case for the operatives at the suggestion of their president. A study of the local, English, and Victorian Acts convinced me of two things. One was that in this State a dentist could legally train operatives in competition with the dental faculty. The other was that operatives here had a stronger claim for registration than assistants had in either England or Victoria, and a still stronger case than local chemists' assistants had two years ago.

"Can Dr. Moore deny that he has not expressed regret that the Bill introduced by the Hon. W. Hannaford last session was not adopted? It appears that Dr. Moore has allowed himself to be used as the mouthpiece of one or two irreconcilables on his executive. That explains his outburst on myself. He suggests that nurses polishing teeth would be eligible for registration under the Bill introduced by the Hon. H. Tassie, but that they do not wish to be registered. Onibbles of this character are unworthy of their author.

"In his statement that the 1921 amendment was put through to register the one remaining assistant without examination Dr. Moore inferentially credits the Dental Board with a grave dereliction of duty. He is, however, wrong. Clause 2 of section 3 of that Act states:—'If such person passes such practical examination he may be registered under section 5 of the Dentists Act Further Amendment Act, 1917, but if he fails to pass such practical examination he shall not be entitled to be so registered.'

Adv. 29-10-30

#### Dental Act Amendment Bill

From "Well Informed," Glenelg:—Hats off to Mr. Tassie on his Bill for dental reform in this State. It is high time the matter was cleared up, and the operators given a chance to do for themselves that which they now do for others. The dentists have evidently crossed the river and burnt their bridges behind them. A little more competition may reduce the costs of this very important necessity, which would all be in keeping with the general order of things.

From "Another Operator":—Mr. Alford's letter is certainly clear and exposes much misrepresentation made by the opponents of this measure. If 55 dentists voted in favor of the abolition of the operator, and only 45 against, how does Dr. Moore figure out the 90 per cent. who, he says, wish the Act to remain unaltered? It follows that if 55 want to abolish operators it cannot be done without the Act being altered, and men who have been trained from 7 to 20 years in the practice of dentistry—who are doing all the work a registered dentist does—should be given an opportunity to prove themselves and their ability and so become registered. Dr. Moore says "Operators are necessary to large practices," but he also knows that the Dental Board, by almost prohibiting advertising, has brought about the desired effect of steadily reducing those "large practices" to "one man shows," consequently operators are being faced with unemployment after years of specialising; for although the ridiculous dental law allows operators to practice dentistry for their employers, it prohibits them doing anything for themselves. Returned soldiers might have been given special consideration re registration. They deserved and were promised all that we could give, and to now refer to them as having got something "easy" is repulsive to a patriot. Dr. Eustace has stated that something "ultimately must be done;" while Dr. Moore says there is a "weakness in the Act." Well, they seem to have been a long time finding it out. Mr. Tassie saw it long ago, and he is endeavoring to put it right. All credit to him.

From Roy L. Sims, South-terrace:—May I, through your columns, ask Mr. Tassie, in view of the very strong opposition of such bodies as the University, Dental Board, the Dental Association, the B.M.A., and Dental Graduates' Society, to his proposed amendments to the Dentists Act, to inform us why he was influenced to advance such proposals?

### DENTAL AMENDING BILL

#### MODIFIED EXAMINATION FARCICAL

To the Editor

Sir—The 1917 amendment of the Dental Act permits any registered dentist to train and employ two operative assistants, who work theoretically under his supervision. The members of the dental profession and (I think) B.M.A. and University do not oppose the deletion of this clause, as it now stands, from the Dental Act. The members of these bodies do, however, emphatically protest against every other suggestion embodied in the Dental Bill now before the Legislative Council. These suggestions are—1. Alteration (as suggested) to the constitution of the Dental Board. 2. The registration of a select section of operative assistants, providing that they pass a modified examination, which, according to modern standards, is regarded by our educational authorities, i.e., the University and Dental Board, as nothing short of farcical.

At an early date this year the Dental Association had a conference with the operative dental assistants to discuss methods by which we could have the undesirable (assistants) clause deleted from our Act without injustice or hardship to any of the parties concerned. The council of the Dental Association intimated that they would support legislation deleting this clause, providing that—1. Those at present engaged as operative assistants were granted the right to continue indefinitely to act in that capacity if they so desired. 2. That operative assistants be granted the right of registration as dentists upon passing the customary Dental Board examinations, without matriculation in only the purely dental subjects (about four) of the curriculum.

This more than fair suggestion would result in the removal of that clause in our Act which has been referred to as a "menace to the public." Although this scarcely seems a rational statement, in view of the fact that since 1917 (when the clause was inserted) the ranks of operative assistants, two of whom are permitted for each of our 170 dentists, have swollen to the number of 15; and all of these claim at least seven years of experience as such, and assert that they are quite competent in all branches of dental science. Further, this suggestion would not deprive any operative assistant of his lawful means of livelihood, as will happen in many cases if the present amendment is passed. It would not deprive dentists with large practices of the services of those operative assistants, who perform only such trivial operations as polishing fillings or relieving dentures. Public interests would be adequately safeguarded as the ranks of operative assistants would be irrevocably closed. And, finally, operative assistants ambitious to become dentists would be given a far greater concession in this direction than they are entitled to expect, but which would be condoned by the profession on the grounds of expediency.

The only section of the community who would suffer an injustice under such conditions would be the past and present dental students, who have been and are honorably fulfilling the educational and practical requirements demanded of those who enter the profession in the orthodox manner.

Despite the leniency and consideration shown to them in the above suggestion, the operative dental assistants refused to accept the conditions contained therein. Does such an attitude indicate a sincere desire on the part of assistants to raise the status of dentistry or to safeguard the public?—I am, Sir, &c.,

A. P. R. MOORE,  
 President Australian Dental Association (S.A. Branch).

Adv. 29-10-30

#### PIANOFORTE RECITAL

##### Mr. Reimann's Students' Success

In the second of three pianoforte recitals given in the Elder Hall last night, advanced students of Mr. I. G. Reimann displayed a high level of general proficiency. Particularly effective was the playing of Miss Adele Wiebusch, her rendering of Scriabine's left-hand nocturne, and a Saint-Saens' mazurka being marked by outstanding merit. With Mrs. Jean Black at the second piano, Miss Wiebusch achieved high success in the finale to Sgambati's concerto (Op. 15).

Tribute is due to Mrs. Black for her musicianly interpretation of Schumann's "Andante and Scherzo" from Sonata, Op. 11, and for her delightful playing, in association with Miss Wiebusch, of the duo, "Variations and Fugue on an Irish Theme" (Norman O'Neill). Other duos creditably performed were "Hommage a Handel, Op. 92" (Mozcheles), by Mrs. Margaret Uriwin and Miss Lucy Daenke; "Old Norwegian Romance, Op. 51" (Grieg), by Mrs. Eveline Shoebridge and Mrs. Jean Black; and "Variations on a

Haydn Theme, Op. 56" (Brahms), by Miss Wiebusch and Mrs. Black. Solo items pleasingly played were "Aufschwung, Op. 12" (Schumann), by Mrs. Uriwin; "L'Alouette" (Glinks-Balakirev); and "Theme and Variations, Op. 2" (Glazounov), by Mrs. Black. Madame Delmar Hall, sang Mozart's "Alleluia" clearly and melodiously. Mr. Charles Gordon's expressive baritone was heard to advantage in the traditional Donegal air, "The Lover's Curse," and in "Bois Epais" (Lully). The concluding recital of this series will be given in the Elder Hall on Thursday evening.

News 24-10-30

#### Unregistered Assistants

"Dental Assistant," Adelaide:—I read the ridiculous proposal of the Hon. H. Tassie, M.L.C., to register a few dental assistants.

As Mr. Tassie desires to place the Act on a sound basis, why does he limit the number to 15 men? Some of these applied unsuccessfully to be registered in Victoria. I can assure Mr. Tassie that there are another 20 men who were born in this State and have been more than 12 years in dentistry. Yet they are not included in his select few.

#### Dental Legislation

F. S. Alford, Adelaide:—The statement by Mr. J. M. Syme (registrar of the Dental Board of South Australia) in "The News" of yesterday that the examination provided for operatives in the Bill introduced by the Hon. H. Tassie is less exacting than that which was required for the registration of dental assistants under the 1917 Act is incorrect.

The previous day the position had been even more palpably misstated when it was asserted that the present Bill, if passed, would create a dangerous precedent under which another batch of dental operatives would be coming forward in a few years with a demand similar to that now made. The obvious fact had been ignored that the Bill under discussion would definitely cause the complete abolition of unregistered dental operative assistants.

Such assistants are practising dentistry. They are of a standard greatly superior to that of those who were eligible for registration under the 1917 Act. Before 1917 mechanics could claim to be dental assistants, and all assistants, with only three years of experience, were eligible for registration.

Now the definitions of both dentistry and operative dental assistants have been so tightened that only genuine operatives would be eligible for registration, subject to their having had at least seven years of experience in the practice of dentistry. They must pass the examination in practical and prosthetic dentistry and orthodontia prescribed in the university course. If they fail they irrevocably lose their means of livelihood. That was not the position in 1917.

At this stage the statement of the chairman of the board that the views expressed by the registrar do not necessarily reflect the opinions of that board is illuminating. That explains the misstatement to which I refer.

The real issue is whether dentists are to be permitted to go on training operatives to practice dentistry to compete with dental graduates. If so, then the Dental Faculty and the Dental Hospital might just as well be abolished because the objects for which they were established are being defeated.