

ADELAIDE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1930

Registration of Operatives

STATEMENT BY BOARD

"If the admission of these 15 operative dental assistants will lift the status of the profession it should be no longer necessary to provide any University or Dental Board examinations," said Mr. J. M. Syme (registrar of the Dental Board of South Australia) this morning.

He was commenting on a statement by Mr. F. S. Alford on behalf of the Operative Dental Assistants' Association, who said that the registration of operative assistants would lift the status of dentistry because in the future the University and the Dental Hospital would be the only training grounds for recruits for the profession.

Referring to remarks by the Hon. H. Tassie, who introduced in the Legislative Council the Bill to amend the Dentists Act, Mr. Syme said that if the Dental Board and the Dentists' Association were to be an identical body it would be tantamount to the creation of a close corporation of the whole profession.

Beneficial Influence

"The general feeling among the better class of the profession is that medical members have a beneficial influence on the board," he added. "If the board were confined to dental members there would be no outside influence."

"While it is desirable that dentists should reach their own decisions, it would be extremely unwise that the administration of the laws should be in their own hands."

Examination Rights

Mr. Tassie, he said, had led the public to believe that the examination would be the same as that passed by students at the Dental Hospital. That was not so. In 1917 an Act similar to the present one was passed, giving certain examination rights to persons who were in the same position as those today.

"There is now a request for a less exacting examination than that set in 1917," concluded Mr. Syme. "In 1917 applicants were required to pass a viva voce and practical examination in operative and prosthetic dentistry."

CASE FOR OPERATIVES

Statement by Mr. Alford

"The statement issued by the Dental Board and published in 'The News' yesterday concerning the Dentists Bill in the Legislative Council only partially applied to the proposed amending legislation," said Mr. Alford this morning, speaking on behalf of the Operative Dental Assistants' Association.

"Where it did apply the statement was neither incorrect or misleading."

"It is nothing short of a scandal that the public of this State should be asked to countenance an Act which makes it possible for dentists to train and employ operatives to do all the work of dentistry," he added. "Such a provision, which is in the 1917 Act, is defeating the objects of the Dental Faculty and the Dental Hospital. Yet that is what those dentists who are opposing the Bill now before Parliament wish to retain."

"Will Remedy Evil"

That measure would remedy that evil, Mr. Alford continued. No more operatives could be trained or employed. Those operatives who had been engaged in dentistry would be given opportunity to secure registration by passing the same examination as that set in 1917. If they could not pass they would lose their means of livelihood.

The statement that such a procedure would give dental assistants a dangerous precedent for similar applications in the future was extremely foolish, as the only operative assistants in the future would be registered dentists.

Status of Dentistry

"The proposed step is not retrogressive," said Mr. Alford. "It does not lower the educational standard of dentistry, because the operatives, when registered, could not treat any more patients than they are now doing."

"Actually their registration, with the closing of the 1917 Act, will lift the status of dentistry to a higher plane, because in the future the University and the Dental Hospital will be the only training grounds for recruits to the dental profession."

"That will be infinitely better for both the public and the dental graduate," proclaimed Mr. Alford. "When these facts are grasped even those few dentists who are opposed to a necessary and an overdue reform will fully endorse the measure brought forward by Mr. Tassie. The majority of dentists already take that view."

KEEP STANDARD OF DENTISTRY HIGH

LEGISLATION requiring dentists who apply for registration to prove that they have attained a specified standard of proficiency and knowledge was not adopted without due consideration, nor should it be lightly discarded.

In recent years medical science has proved that many of the ills of humanity are due, wholly or in part, to dental troubles, and the share of the dentist in curing the sick is becoming increasingly important.

The Hon. H. Tassie claims that the Bill which he has introduced in the Legislative Council will bring the South Australian law into conformity with that of other States and Great Britain and improve the status of the profession.

This view, however, is disputed by the Dental Board of South Australia, the University of Adelaide, the South Australian branch of the British Medical Association, the South Australian branch of the Registered Dental Association, and registered dentists.

All of these authorities contend that to pass the measure would be a retrograde step. The statement issued on their behalf contains many weighty arguments which should be given due consideration by Parliament when debating the Bill.

"Anything that tends to lower the general standard of dental education, which the registration of operatives must cause, is nothing short of a tragedy for the public, which is entitled to service from fully and properly qualified practitioners," say the spokesmen for opponents of the Bill. "Entry to the profession should be by recognised channels only, and a grave injustice would be done to dentists, students, and the public if educational standards are lowered."

The measure introduced by Mr. Tassie provides that any person who has been engaged or employed for seven years as an operative dental assistant shall be entitled to registration as a dentist upon passing an oral and a practical examination.

The Government has equipped a dental hospital which it maintains, and it subsidises the University for the training of dental students. It is contended that if the Bill is passed the way will be opened for admission to the profession of persons who have not had the advantage of the course of education for which the State pays.

Mr. F. S. Alford, speaking for the Operative Dental Assistants' Association, claims that the proposed registration would ensure that in future all operative assistants would be registered dentists.

Although the Bill stipulates that an applicant for registration must have had at least seven years' experience, it provides that if he fail to pass the first examination he may present himself again within 18 months and still again within two years if he be unsuccessful. Then if he should get through any of these tests he must be registered.

This seems like placing a premium upon incompetency. Modern educational practice in all walks of life and in every civilised country is to raise the standard of professions and of trades.

Before passing a measure to which scientific authorities in Adelaide are opposed Parliament should demand incontrovertible evidence that the public will benefit.

News 23/10/30

Adv. 24/10/30

Dental Assistants

"Indignant," Adelaide:—Members of Parliament have to pass Acts relating to many and varied subjects. It is impossible for a few men to have a thorough knowledge of all. Yet without such a knowledge it is impossible for Parliament to legislate wisely.

Fortunately on every subject that has come before Parliament there is in our State, or elsewhere, expert knowledge available to members. Unfortunately, as we know only too well, expert advice has not been always acted upon.

By passing a modified examination 15 dental operative assistants who are now helping registered dentists want to become registered dentists and practise dentistry without supervision.

The Hon. H. Tassie has introduced a Bill in the Legislative Council to register these operative assistants. Mr. Tassie cannot be expected to know all about dental educational requirements to fit persons to be thoroughly equipped to practise dentistry upon the public. But Mr. Tassie and every other member of Parliament have expert knowledge available on the subject.

Such bodies as the following should be consulted before any alteration is contemplated in the Dental Act:—Dental Board of South Australia, University of Adelaide, Faculty of Dentistry, South Australian branch of the British Medical Association, South Australian branch of the Australian Dental Association. These authorities know that the effect of the Bill will be disastrous. They are experts in dental matters.

Mr. Tassie knows that these institutions object to the measure. Yet in face of expert advice not to consider the Bill we have members of Parliament advocating the measure.

MAWSON ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

Sir Douglas Mawson will leave for Melbourne to-day to make final arrangements for his forthcoming Antarctic expedition. He will return to Adelaide some time next week, and will finally leave to join the Discovery on November 4. From Melbourne the Discovery will go to Hobart, where supplies of coal and stores will be taken on board. Sir Douglas expects to leave Hobart about the middle of next month and to be in the Antarctic during the summer. All being well, the Discovery should return to Australia early next April. Whether the ship will call at Adelaide or Melbourne on her return will largely depend on circumstances. It is understood that some arrangements may be made next week for occasional broadcast talks to be given from the ship. These may be relayed throughout Australia.

By ALEX BURNARD
Last night, in the Elder Hall, the first of three pianoforte recitals was given by four advanced pupils from Mr. Reimann's studio. The standard of performance was very high throughout.

Beatrice Schapel opened the programme with Weber's aged "Concert-stuck" op. 79, and displayed sound all-round technique, her octave passages being very sure. Her tone-control was in the main refined, but at odd times a sudden "punishing" pressure would assail the ear. Moszkowski's Liebes-waltzer, op. 57, is a romantic work of the graceful "salon" type, and Miss Schapel made a great thing of it. In Beethoven's G Minor Concerto (1st movement), Dorothy McGregor's passage work was exceptionally clear. The tender major theme might have had rather more suave treatment. She proceeded to Chopin's G Minor Ballade—most musically conceived and executed. Brahms's too-rarely heard Scherzo, op. 4, was given a masterly reading. Flashes of sardonic humor were blent with moments of rugged power. Lolo Newman was heard to great advantage in Beethoven's 4th Concerto (1st movement). It was interesting to note the striking similarity of one of its subjects to the principal one of the preceding opus ("Appassionata" Sonata). Miss Newman did it excellent justice, except that her concluding tone was rather harsh. She piled up a gigantic climax in her other number, Liszt's pianistic Tarantella (from "Venice and Naples"). Maimie Horgan caught the sombre mood of Brahms's G Minor Rhapsody. The Toccata, op. 111, of Saint-Saens, lived up to its name (in its modern acceptance), but Miss Horgan's generous technical equipment was more than adequate to it. Miss Adele Wiebusch was associated with Miss Horgan in the conclusion of the programme in "Lutzow's Wild Chase."

The vocalist assisting was Iris Hart. Her sensing of "Rebecca's Prayer" (Sullivan) was rather reserved, I thought, but we heard some lovely notes, especially at the finish. Her tone seemed a thought "closed" at times. In the old English "Pastoral" of Carey she was delightful. Once or twice there was the tiniest flattening, but she was beautifully true in her florid passages. Marjorie Adamson was her accompanist, and Mr. Reimann and Misses Newman and Schapel supplied second piano parts in the Concertos.

MAIL 25-10-30

"AMAZING JOKE"

DENTAL OPERATIVES' BILL

Officials Slate Mr. Tassie

"The whole business is so amazing that, were not the matter so serious, one might well think that Mr. Tassie was having a huge joke at our expense," said Dr. J. L. Eustace, B.D.S. (member of the committee of the South Australian branch of the Australian Dental Association), when referring to the Hon. H. Tassie's Bill in the Legislative Council to register operative dental assistants as qualified men.

"It is evident from the outset that Mr. Tassie is either very ignorant of dental matters or else has some ulterior motive, which I am quite at loss to understand."

Dr. Eustace said that the most amazing part of the new Bill was that relating to the examination of the dental operatives.

"Mr. Tassie has openly said in the House that the examination will be practical and not theoretical," went on Dr. Eustace. "His Bill states that the said practical examination shall comply with the regulations of 1905—three years after the introduction of the Dental Act, drawn up when dentistry was practically in its infancy here. That means that Mr. Tassie refuses to recognise the fact that dentistry has advanced since 1905. He is giving the assistants an examination based on hopelessly out-of-date methods."

"UNFAIR TO PUBLIC"

"We realise that these dental operatives have spent a fair number of years in their position, and we have no desire to take away their means of livelihood," said another member of the Dental Association. "But we do ask that they should be compelled to pass the same examinations that are set the registered men who have to study for years at the University. To set them a childish and ridiculous examination that is 20 years behind the times is a criminal shame."

"It is not only unfair to us, but also to the public, who unknowingly may class these men as specialists and attend them as such. Seeing that the care of the teeth is of such paramount importance these days we feel that something should be done about it."