

operative dentists affected by Clause 2 of the Bill sat for an examination in May provided by the 1931 Act. Two were registered as a result, while 19 of these experienced candidates were "failed." The standard of examination set was not in accord with either the letter or the spirit of the 1931 Act.

Two of the operative dentists who were "failed" are registered as dentists in New South Wales and Victoria, respectively. All of the affected operative dentists are each treating thousands of patients yearly. They have been doing for their employers for years precisely what they would be entitled to do for themselves if registered. If out of employment they cannot practise their profession for themselves. The registration of these experienced operative dentists does not affect dental students. The latter are qualifying for a University degree, which gives them the highest status, allowing them to practise anywhere. The operative dentists will be entitled to practise in South Australia only. The numbers are final, because they are licensed, and not one more can be trained by the profession to compete with graduates.—I am, Sir, &c.

F. S. ALFORD.

23, Harrow road, St. Peters.

VITAL DECISIONS

Sir—I welcome the editorial in "The Advertiser" of Friday, under the heading "Standard of Dentistry." There is, however, an aspect of this matter which calls for further consideration. It is recognised throughout the world that diseased conditions of the mouth actually cause serious maladies in other parts of the human body. Moreover, these serious maladies can be, and actually are, initiated by wrong methods of treatment and inefficient modes of reasoning. The question at issue is not whether a given person is able to extract a tooth, or is capable of inserting a filling, but rather, whether he can judge when such operations should be undertaken.

The recognised modes of reasoning can be appreciated and applied only by those who have had the advantage of the teaching of recognised educational institutions. I would guard against conveying the impression that knowledge is limited to graduates of a university; but, during their training, a standard is set for them which demands a knowledge of the fundamental sciences. Such graduates are therefore in the possession of knowledge which fits them for deciding whether certain methods of treatment are favorable or inimical to their patients.

It is to be hoped that this most important principle will be considered by our legislators in their further discussions of the proposed amendment to the Dental Act, and that injustice will not be meted out to the whole community by allowing the new Bill to become law.—I am, Sir, &c.

C. B. MADDERN, D.D.Sc.

Goodwood.

News 24-10-32

Five Apply for Rhodes Scholarship

The Registrar of the Adelaide University has received five applications for the 1932 Rhodes Scholarship.

The Rhodes Scholarship is tenable at Oxford University for three years. Its value is £400 a year. The cost of the voyage to and from England has to be met by the successful student.

The South Australian selection committee will probably announce its decision next month. The names of applicants are not released.

Professions Less Crowded Than Last Year

"THE professions are overcrowded!" has been a common cry for the past two or three years. But now, like a good many other depression dirges, it must be qualified. Certainly most of the professions are still uncomfortably full, but the position is definitely healthier than it was in the dark days of 1931.

Enquiries made in Adelaide today showed that there is no lawyer in South Australia without some sort of a job, even though all the jobs held may not be thoroughly congenial. Neither is there an idle doctor. All the engineering students who passed their final examinations at the University last year have secured positions. Architects were very badly hit—39 buildings were erected in Adelaide and suburbs last year, against 3,000 in 1926—but their services, too, are in much better demand now.

At this time last year four or five young Adelaide lawyers were unable to secure legal work or any other sort of billet.

Today there are 230 lawyers practising in the city and the country—between 180 and 200 of them in Adelaide—and 10 to 12 new lawyers are added to the ranks each year. Twenty-two students began the law course at the University this year, but some of these will drop out before the stage of fully fledged lawyer is reached. Fourteen obtained their LL.B. degrees last year, and five were awarded their final certificates in law, enabling them to be admitted to the Bar.

At the beginning of the slump and during it solicitors were concerned chiefly with meetings of creditors and liquidations, and in pressing debtors for money. One firm of solicitors called 60 meetings of creditors in two months.

Now solicitors are getting back to the more usual and constructive type of business, such as the formation of companies. Savings are being invested, and people are putting out money in mortgages again.

"SEVERAL young engineers are seeking positions at present, but so far I think the profession has been fairly fortunate," said Prof. R. W. Chapman, of the faculty of engineering at the University, today.

"Certainly we are not in the flourishing condition of five or six years ago, when the University could not turn out sufficient engineers to meet the demand, but there are few today who are not placed.

"Most of the civil engineers in South Australia are employed in the Government service. There are no big works under construction at present except the Mount Bold Reservoir, and this means that there are very few openings for younger men in the Government. Fortunately, our Government has not adopted a policy of discharging qualified engineers, except in the Railways Department.

There are not many consulting engineers in private practice in South Australia, as there are in the eastern States. Most of the men are employed either by the Government or by the Tramways Trust, the Adelaide Electric Supply Co., or the Gas Co. These companies have striven not to discharge men unless forced to do so. Moreover, they have made jobs to enable young men leaving the University to gain experience and keep in touch with the profession.

"In spite of the depression, 23 youths entered upon the engineering course at the University this year. This was the largest entry we have ever had. Strangely enough, a depression has this effect upon the universities. It increases rather than decreases the number of students. Fathers evidently think that it is better for their sons to be learning rather than let them remain idle."

There are 200 members of the Institution of Engineers in South Australia. In addition there are groups such as marine engineers and power engineers. In Victoria there are 1,000 qualified engineers.

Surveyors in South Australia have been going through lean times. Practically no land is being cut up, and surveyors in private practice have had very little to do.

SOUTH Australia's population of 585,000 is served by 457 doctors. There were 17 new medical practitioners last year, against five withdrawals, making a net addition of 12.

Normally, the rate of increase in the number of doctors is 14 a year. In the opinion of the medical superintendent of the Adelaide Hospital (Dr. Sleeman), this rate of increase is in excess of the demand, and accordingly it is becoming increasingly difficult to find positions for all the new men. He points out that over the past 10 years there have not been 140 withdrawals from the medical profession due to death or retirement.

Twenty-five students began the course in medicine at the University this year, but not all of these will complete the six-year term.

Conditions are definitely better for architects. There is more work in Adelaide offices now than for the last three years, according to the president of the S.A. Institute of Architects (Mr. Hocart). House construction, which had been stagnant, is reviving, and the building industry as a whole has a much more hopeful tone.

The membership of the Institute of Architects is 74, and there are 34 practising firms.

The census figures of 1901, 1911, and 1921 show that as the population of Australia has grown the proportion of those entering the professions for a living has increased.

The number of professional men and women in Australia in 1901 was 112,356, representing 6.8 per cent. of the total breadwinners in the community. By 1911 the number had grown to 146,608, representing 7.3 per cent. of the total breadwinners, and in 1921 it was 201,887 (8.7 per cent.).

To save expense, the usual 10-yearly census was not taken last year, but it is estimated that the proportion of professional people in Australia would now be 10 per cent. or more.

DENTAL BILL OPPOSED MEMBER OF BOARD REVIEWS POSITION

Dr. A. P. R. Moore, a member of the Dental Board of South Australia, yesterday made the following statement with respect to the Dental Bill now before the Legislative Council:—

"The letter of Mr. F. S. Alford in 'The Advertiser' of the 24th inst. calls for comment, as his facts do not, as he claims, 'clarify the position.' Clause 2 of the amending Dental Bill permits dental assistants of six years standing to be registered as dentists, without passing any tests whatsoever, to indicate whether or not they are competent to undertake such responsibilities. The 1931 Dental Act gives these men three chances to pass a modified examination. If they pass, they are registered as dentists. To date, only one of these examinations has been held, yet some of those dental assistants who did not pass are not prepared to make any further efforts, despite an assurance given on their behalf by Mr. Alford (see 'News' of October 27, 1930). He stated—'If they could not pass they would accept the situation and lose their livelihood.'"

"We now see in what spirit the dental assistants accept the situation, and even when they still have two more chances to pass the modified examination. In any case, if they do not pass they will not lose their livelihood, as the 1931 Act has licensed all operative assistants; and, although no more are to be admitted, the present assistants may continue, for as long as they wish, to work in such a capacity. Thus none of the privileges they ever enjoyed are taken from them; and they now have an unmerited and ridiculously easy opportunity of becoming registered dentists.

"The majority of dentists in the eastern States are 'Act of Parliament dentists,' and have not complied with the ordinary regulations governing registration of dentists. The S.A. Dental Board will not register any interstate dentist who has not fulfilled the prescribed educational requirements in the State from which he comes. If he has completed the orthodox course of training he is entitled to registration in S.A. without having to pass any examination. To get rid of their surplus supply of 'political bloomer' dentists, New South Wales and Victoria have for some time been clamoring for an indiscriminate interstate reciprocity for dentists. If reciprocity on a basis other than now existent is ever sanctioned, we can expect an influx of half-baked dentists from other States. The English Dental Act of 1921 was the first Dental Act in that country since 1878, and accomplished in effect what was accomplished by the 1902 Act in S.A., when a number of men who had been practising as dentists were registered without having to pass any examination.

"It was the Great War which awakened British legislators to the appalling condition of the dental profession in their country. Dental legislation and the general status of the profession in S.A. have always been considerably in advance of that which obtains in Great Britain, and it is absurd to cite their 1921 Act (which corresponds with our 1902 Act) as a precedent for concessions to a few dental assistants in 1932, especially as such privileges are in no way justifiable and would never be conceded except by Act of Parliament. The assistants now want a 'back to 1902 week!' In any case, the Hon. H. Tassie ('News,' October 22, 1930), when discussing the provisions of the 1931 Dental Act (which is now law), said—'The Bill, if passed, will bring legislation into conformity with that in operation in Great Britain. The practical examination provided for is exactly the same as is prescribed for students who take the full course in dentistry.' This assertion is also made in Hansard of October 22, 1930. Yet the public is faced with the indignity of further retrogressive dental legislation; which, in view of the source from which it emanates, must be regarded as a very potent argument for the abolition of the Legislative Council. The only claim that this Chamber has for existence is that it is a House of second thought to prevent hasty and socialistic legislation bringing disaster to the community."

STATEMENT FOR DENTAL ASSOCIATION

STANDARD OF TRAINING THREATENED

The following statement relative to the Dentists Act Amendment Bill was issued yesterday on behalf of the Australian Dental Association, S.A. branch:—

"Once again Mr. Tassie has seen fit to introduce an amendment which is so absolutely opposed to all that is decent and just in dental legislation that dentists are literally astounded that members of the Legislative Council should give credence to his state-

ments made last Wednesday Thursday, and further, that members should allow such a measure to reach its present stage practically unopposed. There appears to be something very wrong when Mr. Tassie is allowed to introduce such a measure as a private member's Bill without even informing the Dental Board—a body created by Government and existing for the purpose of administering the Act and for advising Government in such matters. It is still further strange that Mr. Tassie should introduce the amendment at this late stage of the session, and attempt to force this measure through without giving members of Council and other bodies in authority time to even consider the matter. In Council on Wednesday, Mr. Tassie stated that he did not desire that there should be any baulking of discussion. On the following day, when asked by Mr. Duncan to give members a little time to hear the other side of the question, why was he unwilling to do so, and why did he bring the Bill through Committee? The proceedings are greatly to be deplored. In reference to the subject matter of this Bill, it is now proposed to clause 2 to register as dentists, without examination, all operative assistants who have had six years' or more experience. The reason for this is that the results of the examination provided for operative assistants under the 1931 Act are not satisfactory to them, and they now openly assert they have been victimised and justly dealt with by the board of examiners. Because only two out of 21 assistants passed on the first

examination, and three are provided for in the Act, the assistants claim that they have been deliberately 'failed' irrespective of their ability. What would they say to the results of the examination of the first year dental students of last year when none of them passed? And yet it is now proposed to admit all the operative assistants to the register without further examination.

"If it is desirable that the public should receive any consideration at all, surely such a measure should not be passed. Mr. Tassie has made the statement that the operative assistants under the Act of 1931 were to submit to the same standard of examination as the assistants of 1917, when 41 out of 47 were registered. This is not an accurate statement. Operative assistants and dentists alike agreed that that examination was nothing more than a farce. The present operative assistants have stated that dentistry has advanced considerably since that time, and claim that they themselves are in a more advanced class than those of 1917. Yet when they are called upon to show evidence that they have the technical ability of a 21-year dental student (this only was required) and fail to do so, the only impression they have is that the examiners are at fault and not themselves. This is surely too absurd to be seriously considered. We would further point out that it is not the desire of all these operative assistants to become registered, as now proposed. Some of them realise the limitations of their knowledge and desire the opportunity of improving themselves. It is also stated that Clause 3 is in conformity with the English Act, and that the standard of Great Britain is as high as that of South Australia. This statement is made without knowledge of the actual facts. The standard is not so high, and the reason for it is that the authorities have been forced to admit men of little training and knowledge to the Dental Register in the same way that the authorities here have been overruled by political influence. It is to be hoped that members of Parliament here will endeavor to understand the truth of the situation; that they will realise the operative assistants have not been penalised in any way, and that they have been granted many more privileges under the 1931 Act than justice ever demanded. Members should also realise that if this measure is passed there will be no incentive for students to take the legitimate course of training, and the standard of dentistry will once again be debased."

Dental Bill
From E. P. Tideman, student, Dental Hospital.—If Mr. Tassie's Dental Bill becomes law, any prospective dental students would be well advised to carefully consider the position before beginning the study of dentistry. Mr. J. H. Cooke said, "Members are desirous that no injustice should be done, but at the same time are anxious that a high standard should be maintained." This statement is hardly borne out, when one considers that no primary educational qualifications are required of the operative assistants. Hence, if the Bill becomes law, a select few may, within a period of a few years, and after having done very little dental study, become registered dentists, privileged to practise! Contrast this with the matriculation requirements of a bona fide dental student, and the thorough and costly training, both theoretical and practical, which such a student receives during the five-year B.D.S. course at the University and Dental Hospital.