

the Act to indicate clearly that the then existing Council was to complete its term under the old law, otherwise, an election would have been ordered for 1893. And we were assured by our friends in the Legislature that such was the intention. To make the matter more certain, however, I submitted the question to our solicitor, and, as you are aware, his opinion agreed with ours.

But during the summer of 1893 there was considerable discussion in the newspapers and medical journals; and the opinion was advanced by some of our friends that, whatever the literal reading of the Act might be, the intention of the Legislature was to terminate the old Council with its session of last year; and that we should not take advantage of any legal technicality to prolong our existence. Under these circumstances, it seemed to me advisable to secure an opinion which could be accepted as decisive, and for that reason I submitted the matter to the head of the Government, who was also the chairman of the Committee of the Legislature having the medical bill in charge. In doing so, I assured him that "the Council has no desire to do anything but carry out the wishes and intentions of the Legislature, and though a literal reading of the Act might authorize our holding a session next year before the election, I do not think a single member could be found willing to take advantage of it if he thought it was in conflict with the spirit and intent of the law." The answer I received was to the effect that the Premier "had no recollection whatever" of any intention being expressed that the old Council should not hold its usual spring session in 1894, before the election. "And," he added, "if such intention had been expressed, and I so understood, I should certainly have put words in the bill to carry it out."

The assertion in the lay organ of our opponents that we *asked permission* of the Premier to hold the session in 1894 is untrue; and equally untrue is the assertion that permission was only granted "provided it confined its legislation to essential matters with regard to which the next Council would probably be at one with it."

In view of the emphatic statement of the Premier, it is quite evident that the Council could do no other than it has done. While the members might be unanimous in desiring a general election at the earliest possible moment, the law gives this body no power of voluntary dissolution. It cannot go out of existence whenever it desires. It must run the full period prescribed by the Medical Act, and only terminate its existence in due course of law.

It will be your duty at this session to make provision for an election which shall return a new and enlarged Council, and which, it is to be hoped, will set at rest the perturbed spirits of some members of our profession. During the last three years

this body has been made the object of assault by a number of gentlemen whose indignation appears to have slumbered long, and on that account, probably, was the more virulent when it awoke. For years past, according to these gentlemen, the Medical Council has been pursuing an obnoxious course, trampling on the rights of individuals, squandering their money, and betraying the trusts reposed in it. Yet all this time no voice was raised in condemnation. Several elections occurred, but no champion took the field against the iniquitous Council. If it were guilty of all that has been charged against it, these latter-day critics winked at every folly, and condoned every offence. But when the Council secured legislation to enforce the payment by delinquent members of the College of their just dues to the governing body of the profession, then suddenly the eyes of these critics were opened to our conduct, and they commenced an agitation which has been characterized by more vituperation and misrepresentation than any political campaign within the memory of the present generation.

The Council has endeavored to meet this assault by giving the fullest explanation of its course, and by supplying all the information at its disposal—including detailed statements of its transactions for the past twenty five years. It has been asserted—and the assertion has been repeated up to the present time—that the Council has been unable or unwilling to make any reply to the charges brought against it, and that it has allowed its case to go by default. You know that this assertion is incorrect, and so do the men who make it. The addresses of President Williams and others, the detailed financial statement, the letters and articles in the *ONTARIO MEDICAL JOURNAL*, the stenographic reports of our discussions printed in the College Announcement, have all been sent to every practitioner in the Province. It is true, we have not utilized the general newspapers. That has been the preferred medium of our opponents. Our response has been to the profession, and through professional channels.

Further, the Council in its desire for harmony, in its willingness to meet all reasonable objections, and in its confident belief that it had the support of the profession, consented to leave the penalty for non payment of assessments in abeyance until after the next election, and agreed to certain changes in the composition of the body in the direction indicated by its critics.

But this would not serve. Our antagonists seemed afraid to await the verdict of the profession, they preferred to get legislation first, and go to the profession afterwards. They took the position that as a class physicians were incapable of self government, that we could not settle our own affairs by our own representatives, but that an