

Correspondence.

The Examination of Examiners.

To the Editor of the DOMINION DENTAL JOURNAL :

SIR,—I cannot say that I fully agree with such a sweeping revolution as you proposed in the January issue, in the matter of the examination of the fitness of teachers to teach and examiners to examine. It would be a very difficult matter to adjust, and it would not be fair to limit the selection of teachers and examiners to licentiates who possess superior degrees, because a superior degree, as you have yourself repeatedly shown, is not always a proof of superior ability, either theoretical or practical.

I am well aware that fitness to teach and to examine is not possessed by many who otherwise are excellent practitioners. There must not only be previous education, and no small measure of special training, but on the one hand a good knowledge of the subject, and on the other an honorable determination to lay aside personal feeling against special candidates. It needs no ability to ask hard questions, but it needs some for the examiners frequently to answer them.

Dental students at present are not asked to take the complete curriculum in anatomy, physiology and chemistry of the student going forward for a medical and surgical degree. I believe they should ; but in the meantime examiners who ask questions taken from those asked in the second year of medical schools go beyond the limits of law or fair play. Until dental students are obliged to take a full medical course, it must be clear that such severe examinations are unfair. Moreover, it is apparent that examiners sometimes ask questions which we know they are educationally incompetent themselves to answer or even explain. It does not seem to occur to some of them that the object of examination is, not so much to discover what the candidate does not know as much as to find out what he does know. There is probably no single dentist on the continent, of the utmost ability and experience, who could not be nonplussed by some of the vague and controversial questions frequently asked by examiners, whose ability and experience are limited.

If there is suspicion of premeditated determination to "pluck" a candidate ; if it can be proved that individual examiners have declared or even hinted, before examinations occur, that particular