

#### 4. DENTAL HEALTH NEEDS AND DENTAL PRACTICE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE LAYMAN

We now proceed to a statement of the work done by the Survey to date. This is merely a progress report. You will understand, therefore, that no final conclusions can be stated. In fact, *no definite conclusions have yet been reached.*

The *first* project undertaken was to obtain the layman's point of view regarding *dental health needs and dental service.* For this purpose two inquiry forms were carefully devised, one on "Dental Health Needs of the Public" and one on "Qualities and Traits of the Dentist." In preparing these forms, a number of laymen were interviewed to learn their ideas about dental service and dental health needs, and trial forms were sent to a number of laymen. In the light of the returns, the two forms were modified, and somewhat more than 500 of each were sent to different persons residing in 31 states of the United States and eight provinces of Canada. These persons represented various vocations and community interests. A total of 345 forms were returned.

The 168 replies on "Dental Health Needs of the Public" give some rather interesting indications of the conception of the public regarding the health needs for which the dentist should render service. On the basis of these replies the item "Thorough examinations of teeth and jaws" stands at the top of the list. Other items taking very high rank are (1) "Use of X-Rays in the examination of teeth and jaws," (2) "Instruction on the care of children's teeth," (3) "Treatment of irregularities of the teeth," and (4) "Diagnosis and treatment of diseased conditions of the gums."

These laymen were also asked to indicate which dental health needs, in their opinion, the dental profession fails to meet adequately. One of the most significant features of the replies seems to be the feeling that the dental profession fails to give instruction relating to oral health. The public also apparently feels that diseased conditions of the gums are not adequately cared for by the profession. Another item which, in the estimation of the public, seems to be much neglected, is the use of X-Rays in the examination of teeth and jaws. A large percentage of the laymen replying think the profession fails to meet adequately