

Hon. Geo. W. Ross, who, after some pleasant introductory remarks, proceeded to say.

"It is likely the medical profession and its privileges will be up for discussion before the next session of the Legislative Assembly, and it is possible the question may be asked, 'there any good reason for throwing around the practice of medicine any statutory safeguards whatsoever? Would it not be in the public interest to abolish the Medical Council and allow the various colleges and Schools of Medicine in the country the fullest liberty in the matter of issuing licenses to practise medicine? You are doubtless aware that the Medical Council was first established in 1866 by the old Parliament of Canada: that since that time Medical Councils, having jurisdiction somewhat similar to the Medical Council of Ontario, have been established in England and a great many States of the American Union. The object of the Legislature in establishing the Council was not so much to protect the profession as it was to protect the public. Different Schools of Medicine and colleges were found to be competing with each other for students, and from the desire which students usually have to find, if possible, some royal road to learning, the college offering the greatest facilities for an easy degree might possibly have the largest number of graduates. It will be for the medical profession to show that the protection given to the public by the establishment of the Medical Council has not unintentionally resulted in creating a monopoly for the medical profession, or erected insuperable barriers in the way of entrance to the profession, that the Medical Council has itself been progressive in the highest sense of the term, and that through its examinations professional education has not been retarded, but rather advanced.

Then, when you have justified the existence of the Medical Council, as I hope you will be able to do, you may be asked to readjust the standards of the profession. For instance, it is said that the standard for admission to the profession should be lowered, the course of study shortened, and the additional year for clinical study under a regular practitioner abolished. Each of these objections must be examined on its merits. Does the standard for admission now prescribed deter any person of reasonable ability from entering the

profession? Are the obligations imposed by the medical profession upon students, either in the way of fees, or studies, or clinics, so great as to interfere with that freedom of professional movement or choice which should be the privilege of every man in a free country?

It will be your duty to answer these questions. And if I am not very much mistaken your answer will be that the supply is quite equal to the demand, and that the standards required by the Medical Council, while not preventing any person from entering the profession who has talent, energy, and a moderate amount of capital, furnish a guarantee—a very proper guarantee to the public that the licentiate of the Council is a *bona fide* physician, equally learned with his fellows of similar standing in any part of this continent, or any other continent, where medicine is included among the learned professions.

But these elementary questions may not exhaust the legislative catechism in which you are likely to be drilled. For instance, you may be asked to consider whether you should be allowed to continue to exercise the right you now possess of disciplining the profession. Have you exercised that right prudently? Have you ever expelled a member because he wore a high hat, or dressed too dudishly, or drove too fine a turn-out? Have you so terrorized and tyrannized the members of the profession generally that, rather than endure such bondage, the best of them have resigned their license and taken to law, or politics, or aldermanic honors, or some other more lucrative calling than medicine? Have your rules for professional etiquette and honor lost to the country any doctor whose great talents thus summarily extinguished could fairly be called a public loss? If not, you must be prepared with evidence, for it is quite possible the charge will be made.

You see from these brief observations how much of the time of the Legislature of Ontario may be taken up with the consideration of professional matters in which you are no doubt deeply interested. I cannot speak for this legislature—I have not seen it yet—but I will be greatly surprised if it will lend itself to any legislation which will lower the educational standards of the medical or any other profession, or will give for one moment color to the idea that the Province of