

LAY SUPERVISION OF MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS.

We transcribe the following from the *Chicago Medical Review*, not because we regard it as specially applicable to ourselves, but because we look upon the principle enunciated as sound and true, as universally applicable and finally to prevail. Hospitals are institutions for the care and cure of the sick, and all other ends and objects must be made subservient to this, cost what it cost. It would be as reasonable to expect a medical man to manage a bank, or preside in a court of justice, as to entrust to the hands of a lay committee the management of a house for the cure of the sick. Every such Board should, therefore, have a medical majority at its deliberations.

"A matter that certainly threatens the independence of the profession is the lay supervision and control of various medical institutions. Numerous evils have resulted from this during the past decade, and the outlook for the future is by no means promising. The recent scandalous occurrences at Guy's Hospital, London, the arbitrary dismissal of consulting physicians to the Presbyterian Hospital, New York, and certain occurrences of similar tenor in connection with Bellevue and other hospitals in various cities, show that the lay control of institutions devoted to the care of invalids, results in lowering public estimation of the profession, in diminishing the efficacy of hospitals, and in conducting them on a purely economical basis. The same remark holds good of asylums for the insane, which are in many instances but sops to the thirst for internal improvements of certain localities. A board of local trustees is chosen for these, and these gentlemen generally choose a medical man in obedience to the same solicitation for the welfare of local interests. The result of this is that the hospital or asylum, as the case may be, is run purely as a show establishment, its efficiency is judged chiefly by the amount of dollars saved out of the annual appropriation. If the hospital be municipal, there is generally a lay superintendent chosen, whose ability has hitherto been chiefly displayed in the direction of controlling the primaries of his party, and

the office under him becomes simply a means of rewarding fourth and fifth rate politicians. This system of lay supervision has in many states resulted in the prevention of the proper utilization of the clinical advantages offered by the hospitals, and in numerous unsavory scandals. To such an extent has this lay supervision been carried, that the health officer, a purely medical position, is a layman, generally set in his ideas, and ignorant of all sanitary science. This state of things is both a disgrace and a danger to the profession, the more so as it is easily remediable. The different local medical societies could soon regulate this matter if they would but resolve that it is inconsistent with the dignity of the profession, with the best interests of the community, that any public institution charged with the care of invalids or the care of the insane, should be under lay control. A course of social tabooing of such physicians as went against the sense of the profession as thus expressed, would soon place the various hospital and other authorities in such a position that they would be compelled to bow to the views of the profession. Until this is done, clinical opportunities will continue to be wasted, social cliques will continue to regulate hospital appointments."—*Chicago Medical Review*.

THE ONTARIO MEDICAL COUNCIL AND THE MEDICAL DINNERS.

From the sentiments expressed at the recent medical dinners it is quite evident that the Medical Council does not command the respect which it is desirable it should, either among the laity or the profession (including the teachers as well as students). While we must respect the dignified manner in which Mr. Knill, the chairman of the Toronto School dinner treated the subject, we could not but regret that there was any occasion for his reference to the "unseemly squabbles" which have occurred in the past between the students and the Council.

While listening to the able and interesting speech of the Rev. Dr. Wild, we were impressed with the idea, while he was "knocking the Council on the head," that he did not possess