

Correspondence.

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DR. BURROWS' LETTER.

To the Editor of ONTARIO MEDICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—From letters that have appeared from time to time in the Toronto dailies, from the action taken by the Medical Defence Association, and the members who, in a large degree, support that Association, I am led to believe that there are many who do not approve of the action of the Medical Council of Ontario.

I am one of those who think their past acts are not reasonably defensible, as being in the interests of those they are supposed to represent, and as the amount collected from the profession is very large, the remuneration to individual examiners largely increased, the expense of examinations greater, the comfort of students, and medical practitioners not properly consulted, it appears there is something radically wrong.

I hold that the investment of the money taken from the profession, and, in a large degree, from the students, and invested in expensive buildings under whatever pretext or excuse, was wrong and very ill-advised. I hold that this building was not necessary in the slightest degree, and to-day offers no convenience that could not readily have been secured without a cent's expense.

The main reasons given in excuse appear to be "that it will provide a reference library" to write letters in, "receive friends," meet the members of the profession living in Toronto, and lastly, "a proper place for examinations."

There is in Toronto at least one medical school offering excellent roomy accommodation, owned body and bones by the Province; also our Education Department, to which the same particulars apply. Are we tabooed as citizens and voters because we belong to the medical profession? Are these places barred against us? And the General Hospital, would not a room or ward, with bedside examinations near by, offer advantages? Then the first-class hotels, clubs and Young Men's Christian Association, what is the matter with these?

Other associations, secret societies, conventions

and gatherings which greatly exceed ours in point of numbers, are regularly accommodated. They have no reason to complain of any difficulty or unwillingness, why should we? And, as a matter of fact, do we? Are not all the reasons given foolish and ridiculous? Lastly, we are told that it is a good investment as a commercial speculation, and would realize an amount much greater than the original investment if placed on the market. This I doubt, anyway; of one thing I am satisfied that, as the supposed convenience and benefit is a myth pure and simple, the sooner the property is turned into cash the better, and the sooner that the money goes back to its original owners the better.

This investment was, to my mind, a mistake unjustifiable and inexcusable; but the Medical Council, as originally constituted, and the Medical Act were mistakes, as well as the personnel, which was not fairly representative of the ability and sobriety of the medical profession; the fact that any individual making oath that he was in practice before 1852, was entitled to registration; the fact that at its inception the medical colleges rammed, crammed, jammed hundreds of matriculates and their graduates through to take advantage of its provisions; the fact that it was a welding of incongruous elements, a matter of compromise with all schools and sects; and the fact that arbitrary powers were given to the Council, were from the first "building on a sandy foundation."

It is true that it has hung together, but it is equally true that the proceedings of this august body have at times been simply a disgrace and reproach to the profession, and the examinations at certain times, in certain subjects, and certain interests, a sham and a farce.

I think, sir, the general profession agree with me in these expressions. I do not agree *in toto* with all the Defence Association contend, nor do I justify these questionable acts of which the Medical Council have been guilty; but I do think that, while these acts have received criticism and censure, the individuals are not considered. What has been done by them may be mended in some degree. But are we to expect much improvement under the present regime?

Is it not patent that, from the first to the present, the same men, the same minds hold control, the same individuals give certificates of good con-