

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 19th April, 1951.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. J. Gutch, O.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT :

The President, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. J. Gutch, O.B.E.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. D. J. Parkinson, O.B.E. (Acting),

The Hon. the Attorney General, Mr. F. W. Holder, K.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.M.G., C.B.E.,

The Hon. C. V. Wight, C.B.E., (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E., (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Dr. J. A. Nicholson (Georgetown North).

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E., (Nominated).

The Hon. Capt. J. P. Coghlan (Demerara River).

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. Dr. G. M. Gonsalves (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. Dr. C. Jagan (Central Demerara).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. A. T. Peters (Western Berbice).

The Hon. W. A. Phang (North Western District).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).

The Hon. J. Carter (Georgetown South).

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

PRESENTATION.

ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY TESTIMONIAL FOR MASTER P. L. WILLEMS :

The PRESIDENT: Hon. Members, before we proceed to the business on the Order Paper, there is a presentation for me to make to Master Peter Leon Willems.

(Addressing the recipient) Peter Leon Willems, although the memory will be painful to you, it is right that I should briefly recount the circumstances of the brave act for which the Royal Humane Society have awarded you their Testimonial on Vellum.

On the 1st September, 1950, you were bathing at Worthing Beach, Barbados, alone with your grandmother, the late Mrs. Ursula Willems. You were nearly out of your depth. A wave knocked Mrs. Willems over and in the effort to recover herself she

suffered a heart attack. Seeing her lying face down in the water, you caught hold of her and managed to keep her head above the water by jumping up and down, whilst you shouted for assistance. It was some fifteen minutes before help came, but owing to your having held her up, your grandmother was still alive and lived for two days afterwards. Had it not been for your action she would have been drowned immediately.

It gives me great pleasure, Peter Willems, to present to you on behalf of the Royal Humane Society, this Testimonial on Vellum for the courage and humanity shewn by you on that occasion.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 13th April, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Parkinson, Acting) laid on the table the following :—

The British Guiana Tourist Committee Report for 1950.

The Report of the Re-Settlement Committee for the period 22nd September, 1944, to 31st December, 1950.

The Financial Statements of the British Guiana Airways, Limited, for the year ended 30th September, 1950.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

INTRODUCTIO OF BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled—

“An Ordinance to amend the New Amsterdam Town Council Ordinance 1949”.

ORDER OF THE DAY

DENTAL MECHANIC REGISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Council resumed consideration of the following motion by the Colonial Secretary—

“That this Council accepts in principle the recommendations in the Report of the Dental Mechanic Registration Committee, which has been laid on the table.”

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member for Western Essequibo was addressing the Council on the report of the Dental Mechanic Registration Committee when we adjourned.

Mr. WIGHT: Since the adjournment I have taken the opportunity to discuss with Mr Percy King, one of the members of the Committee, the views which have been expressed in this Council, and the suggestions which have been made. If hon. Members desire to hear him, I have no doubt, from what he has said, that he would be perfectly willing to give hon. Members the benefit of his views and his reasons for having signed the report. It might be very useful if he did so, because of the fact that he was the Chairman of the Committee which sat in the first instance and allowed the registration of those dentists who were unqualified, but were allowed to register. He may be able, therefore, to give a comparison of that position with the present position. He confirms the view that the question of examination was considered but, as he says, and as I have already informed this Council, the majority of the dental mechanics and assistants, through their Association, were against the suggestion of an examination. In other words, they were in favour of registration without examination. As far as I am concerned, as a signatory of that report, if the Council feels so and Government is inclined, there would be no objection, as far as I see, to registration if some form of examination were allowed. We have also seen the sugges-

tion in two of the daily papers this morning. I think they had leading articles on the question — one in the *Daily Argosy* and the other in the *Daily Chronicle* expressing different views. On the general principle I do not think that any hon. Member, despite what has been said about the report, really feels that the report, as such, is not a report which should be the ideal. Therefore, the motion should be adopted supporting that report.

I say this because, if we had not the position which is advanced as a main reason, that there are not enough dentists and therefore these people are serving the needs of the rural population, what is there to find wrong with the report itself? In other words, if these 18 men were qualified and they were on the register, or could be placed on the register, are we to say that the needs of the rural population are still satisfied and, therefore, other men similarly placed should be registered without qualification or without examination? It seems, therefore, that the plea for the registration of this particular group of 18 dental mechanics resolves itself on the question that, because of the lack of dentists in the community, and because of the fact that these men may serve some part of the community, we should allow them to go on the register without examination.

We have had the suggestion that these men should be put on the register and be confined to certain areas without examination, but just by application and by saying that they had practised dentistry before 1949 for so many years, supported with a certificate of competence and character from some person or persons in the community. There again, if one were able to produce for perusal the evidence which was led before the Committee, one would automatically be faced with the difficulty of knowing exactly what to do in the circumstances. The evidence of certain individuals was that they had had very little practice under any particular dentist or dentists; they had

migrated from one to another, some under whom they had served being now dead. Some of them were in a fluid state of not knowing how they served and where they served. That, I think, deals with the main opposition to the Committee and the suggestion that these unqualified men should be registered.

Such registration would mean, as has been suggested, that having been registered, they have become fully qualified dentists. Now are we to say that a qualified man who becomes a dentist, a lawyer or a doctor can only practise in a certain district? If he is on any register his freedom of choosing his profession and of practising his profession would then be limited, and he would be a dentist, a lawyer or a doctor under a special form of registration. In certain cases the witnesses themselves admitted that they would only confine themselves to extractions, and any difficult case would be forwarded to the Hospital or to a qualified dentist. It would be amusing if I were to read a bit of evidence which was given to the Committee by one member of this group. When he was asked what he would do with a fractured jaw, he promptly replied "I would take that jaw and push it back into position". One witness did not know how many teeth are in the mouth. It is true that the dentists on the other side in their evidence gave us an elaborate system of training, which dentists nowadays have to go through.

If it is thought that these persons are to sit some examination, I myself do not think that it would really be a question of having to follow that syllabus, because many of them are old men with wives and children, and I feel that they are not of what I call an examination age. Some of them are around 45 and 50, and some older, and can hardly be expected to go back to school and learn biology, chemistry and the various other subjects which are on the syllabus of the Dentist Board, to become qualified, though I think that with a

little opportunity two or three, or maybe four or five — if given an opportunity, as I suggested, by way of assistance from Government either by a grant or a loan,—would be able to qualify in the proper syllabus of the dentist's course. It has been suggested that they should be given the opportunity of being placed on a special register and in some limited form. I do not think the supporters of registration have suggested full registration without qualification, and that they be allowed to be dentists in the full sense of the term.

With regard to the dental mechanic or assistant, as he calls himself, I may point out, without going into too much detail, that the term "dental mechanic" or "dental mechanic assistant" as known locally, is in no wise the same as a dental mechanic or assistant as is known elsewhere. It is true that in some cases some of them have assisted at the chair; some have been present at the chair, and some of them have even gone as far as to allege that they carried on the practice for professional men. Evidence was produced to the effect that they had acted for professional men. One man in fact had actually, I believe, for some period of time acted in that capacity even at the Bauxite Company up the Berbice River. Therefore, it was thought by the Committee that there should be a register of dental mechanics and a register of dental assistants.

It is true that in these parts a dental mechanic or dental assistant may not be able at first to make, in that particular sphere, a reasonable living, because of the fact that the dentist himself never employs a dental mechanic or dental assistant in the true sense of the term. In most cases we were informed that the dentists themselves prepare the denture and carry out that work. I think there are only two dentists who really employ a qualified dental mechanic for that purpose, and as such. I do not think there is any cavilling over the fact that there should be a register of dental

mechanics, or that dental assistants should be registered. As the hon. the Colonial Secretary has said, the mobile units and other recommendations are hardly in dispute.

It only remains to add that the Committee was there not necessarily to find ways and means for the purpose of admitting these persons to the register by way of examination or otherwise. The Committee has written a report, and with all due respect to the hon. Members who have spoken, it is difficult to say that that report is not sound in theory, and as such is not ideal. In other words, is there anybody who can say that after the admission of these 18 dental mechanics and assistants, if they are admitted to the register, we will not have another application to admit unqualified men? If these 18 unqualified men were on the register, would this Council allow a petition for registration by the other 300 or 400 or 500 similarly placed, or would it not agree that in future, from this date, or as from such a date, only qualified dentists should be registered? Is there anything wrong with that? We have heard that the Committee has not considered it in the form of realism. It has been suggested that it was biased. It has been suggested that the Committee never took into consideration the particular circumstances. In fact it has been suggested that the report may very well not have been written. But I do feel that hon. Members on due reflection on the report, will themselves admit that the report is exactly what they themselves would have written in the circumstances— (a) that they only want qualified men on the register of dentists; (b) that they want mobile dental units; and (c) that there should be a separate register for dental mechanics and assistants.

In that respect also, sir, are we to allow anybody to be placed on the register as a dental mechanic or dental assistant without some form of qualification, some system of examination? Today, even entry into the Civil Service of an ordinary clerk needs exam-

ination. As I say, we are living in an examination age. It is true we may get away from it, but I say this: It may be better if we do get away from this examination age. It is quite easy to cram and get through an examination, but often men who have had no examination have turned out in particular spheres, even technical spheres, better than those with the highest qualification. However, this seems to be the era of having examinations as the yardstick of entrance into the professions and, further, the tendency is to intensify and tighten up the examination curriculum and syllabus. As I have said — and in this respect I think I can speak for every member of the Committee—we were in sympathy with these men. They had no opportunity of even learning correctly the part they are playing as dental mechanics and assistants; there were no schools where they could go and learn by practical experience the various forms which go to make up the full dentist's curriculum. They have also, it is true, no opportunity here of qualifying according to the full dentist's syllabus. Maybe they can take lectures in some of the subjects, but certainly in not all the subjects.

In regard to the examination it was felt that they would be prejudiced with a local body, because one would have to appoint local dentists on it who would be prejudiced, and it was felt that no one would be able to appoint a Committee impartial enough to take the examination. Of course that in itself is not a great barrier, because it can be easily arranged that the examination papers be marked by persons outside of the Colony. The difficulty, of course, would be the practical examination.

I have in mind an examination similar to that of the R.S.I., for which candidates go out of the Colony at certain times. There are a few dental mechanics who might be given an opportunity and assistance by Government

to qualify as dentists if they can conveniently do so, either by means of a grant or a loan on easy terms of repayment. Even then there would be obstacles or difficulties, because some of them are married men with families.

The position is one entirely for Members of this Council, and I presume that no members of the Committee would object to some form of examination, practical or theoretical, the details of which may be worked out by the D.M.S. or some responsible body. There was one Member who felt that admission might even take the form of registration without qualification or examination. As I have said, I have had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Percy King, one of the signatories to the report, who told me he would have no objection to some form of examination being set up for those 18 men. I think the Committee was of the opinion that there must be a deadline drawn somewhere with regard to unqualified dentists being placed on the register as professional dentists. For the benefit of those Hon. Members who were not in their seats when I began to speak, I will repeat that Mr. Percy King, who was a member of the previous Committee when other unqualified men were allowed to register under the provisions of the previous Ordinance, is perfectly willing, if Members so desire, to express his views on the question before this Council.

Mr. ROTH: The Hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Wight) has made the point that even if the unqualified men were put on the register they would be as a drop in the ocean in providing the necessary dental service for the entire population of the Colony. Of course the answer to that is that half a loaf is better than no bread at all, even though it might be a bit sour. Not for one moment do I suggest that all 18 of the dental mechanics should *ipso facto* be put on the register. As the Hon. Member has more than once in his remarks pleaded that four of those men should be considered, and might

with advantage be given some assistance and opportunity to qualify themselves, I suggest to Government that his suggestion should be followed up, and provided those four men, or any of them, are willing to qualify themselves they should be assisted by Government to do so.

A point that has struck me about the report, and as the Hon. Member has very rightly pointed out, is the desirability of not allowing unqualified persons to tamper with people's mouths. That is as it should be, but what steps are being taken to see that qualified dentists keep up to standard? Members may be shocked to hear that recently I forwarded to the Director of Medical Services a signed complaint by two unfortunate persons against a registered dentist who had to dig into his pocket to the extent of \$500 to avoid being prosecuted for bad work. What steps will Government take to see that the registered dentists toe the line, or do their work properly? The Director of Medical Services told me he was following the matter up.

Finally, if Government would give an undertaking to consider the suggestion that at least the four mentioned be given an opportunity of qualifying for registration by submitting themselves to some form of examination, I would support the motion. I am afraid I will not be able to do so unless Government gives that undertaking.

Dr. GONSALVES: I did not intend to speak on this motion because, as a member of the Committee, I thought my work had been done with great caution, but I could not sit here quietly and listen to such misrepresentation of the facts as they were placed before the Committee, and on which we arrived at our conclusions. I am asking Hon. Members to bear with me while I examine those facts for a few minutes, and let us see whether we have given those dental mechanics a fair chance. I would ask the Hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Wight) whether he would be prepared to allow lawyers'

clerks to practise as lawyers, and whether medical practitioners would agree to sicknurses being allowed to practise as full-fledged doctors?

The Committee held 14 meetings to which I travelled 135 miles per trip from New Amsterdam. We took care to present to the Committee the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Dentistry—a Committee appointed to investigate a similar situation in England. We also placed at the disposal of the Committee the latest information from the United States of America on the subject of dentistry. We did not do those things because we were prejudiced against the dental mechanics. I have nothing to complain about, but I am saying that if we allowed this state of affairs to continue this Colony would always be short of qualified dentists, because those who return to the Colony would not remain owing to the uneven competition. One Hon. Member pointed out that there were 108,000 people to one dentist, and three dentists to 324,000 people. That is as unrealistic as one can imagine. The total population of the Colony is less than half a million, and it is said that there are five registered dentists in New Amsterdam, 20 in Georgetown and three in the outlying districts.

Mr. LUCKHOO: The point made was that in the rural areas it worked out at one dentist to every 108,000 persons.

Dr. GONSALVES: It does not alter the position one whit. The number of registered dentists available must be taken as a whole. I am going to prove to this Council that the argument that many people are suffering is not true at all, and that the same situation occurs in other countries, especially in Europe and America, but a howl is not made about it. Reviewing the situation the Committee states in paragraph 2 of its report:

"2. It seemed to us that our approach to the task set us must of necessity begin with a brief historical study of the steps by which the present law governing dental

registration had been reached. Thereafter we sought to discover for what reasons, and at what phase in the local history of dental registration dental technicians were excluded as such from registered practice. These studies were followed by an investigation into the differences which obtain in the training of graduate dentists, of other persons until recently registrable as dentists, and of dental technicians; particular regard being paid to the effects which such differences, in training might be expected to have on the dental practice of persons in these categories assuming all were registrable."

In paragraph 3 it is stated:

"We have held in all fourteen meetings, the first eleven of which were devoted to the hearing of oral evidence given by the organizations and individuals listed in Appendix I. In addition we have studied the written documents listed in Appendix II. and have paid due regard to relevant publications. . ."

Later in the report it is stated:

"6. It has been asserted by a number of witnesses that the qualification or approved 'certificate' required under the section quoted above involves intensive and 'systematic theoretical and practical training.' Advocates of this view tendered to us the curricular requirements of recognised dental schools with the object of enabling us to evaluate the degree of 'skill and competence' which a local dental mechanic should be expected to acquire before registration rendered him liable to be called upon to practise all phases of dentistry. Later, in our report, we elaborate on the training said to be received by dental graduates from recognised schools."

In clause 8 of the report it is stated:

"8. We have given consideration also to the distribution and location throughout the Colony of practising dentists on a numerical basis, and have found that, of the total of twenty-eight practising dentists whose services are available to the Colony's population, twenty practise exclusively in the City of Georgetown, five in New Amsterdam, and three only in the rural areas."

In certain of the Southern States of the United States of America one will hardly find more than one dentist to about 20,000 of the population. If in a wealthy country like the United States of America there is in some parts such an acute shortage of dentists, what is

the conclusion to be drawn? The conclusion is that dental troubles do not recur with the same frequency as medical troubles. It therefore requires a large population for a dentist to subsist or make a living in proportion to the vast amount of expenditure he has to incur to qualify himself. In the first place a dental student who seeks admission to a dental school is required to have reached matriculation standard, or at least to have obtained a Senior Cambridge certificate. With such qualifications he is accepted for a two-year intensive pre-dental training before he is admitted into the College for a further course of four years' training. If, after that course, he wishes to qualify for a Master of Science degree, or a Dental Science degree, he has to take a post-graduate course of two years. After that intensive course of training the dental graduate has to submit himself to a State Board examination before he is allowed to practise his profession in the United States of America. Why should we be so different in British Guiana? The same situation has arisen in England, and I hold in my hand a copy of the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Dentistry which was appointed by H.M. Government.

So that this situation is not new. When dentistry came into its own in America there were many men in the same position as our dental mechanics. Those were the days when dentistry was a craft and not a science. Why should our young men go abroad and spend a little fortune in order to qualify as dentists, and return to the Colony to find that they are not regarded as professional men, but treated as if they are of the same status as men who have not been trained and refused to be trained? The Committee gave every opportunity to representatives of the British Guiana Dental Assistants and Technicians' Association to express their views. We were most sympathetic, but when one man was asked what stage in dentistry he had reached he replied that he had "reached the State Board Questions and

Answers". He was then asked where he had obtained those "Questions and Answers" and he said he had seen them in his brother-in-law's office. What are the State Board "Questions and Answers?" Our medical experts here can tell this Council that dentistry is a specialized branch of medicine and plays a tremendous part in the health movement. We have to face facts; we must either accept the Committee's report or throw it out and have a free-for-all. I believe that all graduate dentists feel as I do. The time has come when a stop must be put to this illegal practise of dentistry, as has been done in other countries. Another man who appeared before the Committee said he had been trained by me. I admitted, and he admitted too, that he was with me off and on, two or three days per week for a short while—less than a year. He also admitted in answer to another member of the Committee that I did not allow him to do any extractions, or any work at the chair, but he said that I sent him to Skeldon and turned him loose—a most unusual practise.

I am asking Members to take heed of what is happening. He also said that he was being trained by another dentist and worked at the chair when the dentist was not present. All the noise about lack of dental service and the suffering of the people in the rural areas is absolutely untrue. It may be true to a very small extent. What qualified dentist is going to set himself up in some place on the Essequibo Coast where there are 300 or 400 people? Quite recently a qualified dentist who is now practising in Main Street, Georgetown, went up to Skeldon and established his parlour there, but he had to return to Georgetown. We must not delude ourselves in this matter. Why should the people in the rural areas be provided with inferior service, whether dental or medical? I have nothing to say about those men who, before the Ordinance was passed, were allowed to practise. Whether they practise well or not they are registered dentists. If the principle is not upheld we are going to have a lot of

trouble. Members seem to believe that there are only 18 men involved, but there is an underground army behind them, and the results would be seen if those unqualified men were allowed to practise. If the report is sent back to the Committee, as one Member has suggested, I would not serve on a Committee of this kind. I submit that no group of reasonable men who had studied all phases of the question as we have done, would have come to any other conclusions than those we have arrived at.

The hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Wight) mentioned that we suggested that two or three men who have had a fairly good basic training could be given a chance to go to the West Indies University. I would readily agree to it if there was such a possibility. I have nothing against this sort of thing, but after we have gone to that extent we hear that the report is unrealistic, confusing, cannot stand scrutiny, and is tissue thin. I am puzzled to understand what it is. When this Committee was about to be appointed one newspaper in a letter column advocated that certain men should be on the Committee. I want to say that two of the men they advocated were placed on the Committee. I know also that when the Committee was about to submit its report an editorial appeared in one of the newspapers which said it was satisfied that a fair and just report would be given, because there were men on the Committee who were reputable and cultured. There were exceptions, but I will not say who they were. Today you will hear. Let me eliminate myself from the set of reputable and cultured men. There are times when I am not particular to be called a gentleman. There are times when facts are put bluntly. I am saying that the rest of the men can take the bulk of the credit, and I would have no grudge. Who are the men?—Our Hon. Senior Member, the Deputy President, a man like Mr. Percy King whom the whole country respects—they served on the committee; If you have any courtesy, some respect and consideration

for your Director of Medical Services, your Dental Officer and myself, they also served on the Committee. We have done everything to assist those people and it was difficult to come to a conclusion, as the hon. Deputy President said. I believe, after we had listened to the men themselves, it was then not difficult to come to a conclusion.

We said that in the North West District there are 8,000 souls with two dentists. From my experience—I have been about quite a bit—I have never heard of a population of 8,000 being served by two dentists. I am willing to wager that those two men cannot make a decent living because of the reason I have given. You do not have a recurrence of dental troubles as often as to permit that and, therefore, you need a much larger population on which a trained dentist can make a living. You have a Dental Officer now at the Public Hospital, Georgetown. He makes monthly trips to Bartica, Mabaruma, Suddie and other places, advertised duly in the *Gazette*. In New Amsterdam there is a part-time man on a contract basis, and people go to him. There is also in New Amsterdam a contracted person to do a certain amount of work for school children. Then the situation is not as bad as we are made to believe. We can then say that, perhaps, Government is doing all that can be done in its poor capacity, but at the same time we cannot say that something is not being done. When I started work in New Amsterdam 13 or 15 years ago the condition of the mouths of the children was very bad compared with what it is today. It does not take anybody with any specialised knowledge to see the great improvement. To suggest to us that the people do not have any means of getting dental service is not true. I would leave that and come over to this side of the fence.

As late as this morning, coming to Georgetown, I saw at Mahaica the signboard of a qualified dentist, and between Mahaica and Unity I also saw the signboard of a registered dentist, whether qualified or not I do not know. I also saw another signboard at Dundee in the

Mahaica District. There are others further up. It has been stated that some of the people in the D'Edward area are asking for these men to be registered. Where is D'Edward? Less than a mile from Rosignol. Just think how ridiculous that is when they can cross the ferry every hour from there to New Amsterdam and get dental attention. Yet we are told the people of D'Edward have signed a petition praying the assistance of hon. Members in this matter lest the people suffer. It is strange that they find their way to the hospital at New Amsterdam when there is an accident. They have gone to the hospital with broken jaws and persons have been sent to the hospital at New Amsterdam by the District Medical Officer from the Courentyne bleeding. The hospital's records will prove that. But you hear now that these things are not true, and that the people are suffering badly.

I ask Members to take a realistic view of the picture. If you feel that the Committee has not done good work, throw out the report, but do not say that we have not given every care, every scrutiny to the claims and aspirations of the men in question. The men who gave evidence before the Committee for the British Medical Association were Dr. Nehaul, Dr. Fung-Kee-Fung, Surgeon Specialist, Dr. Ho and Dr. Hugh—all recognised men. One of them said that as specialists they many times referred cases to dentists for advice and treatment before they treated the patients. I have said before—some Members may have been to the Mayo Clinic in the United States of America—you can get no work done there, whether major or minor surgery, until you have passed through the Dental Department. Must we say that those medical men are prejudiced?

Are we not to consider what may be called expert evidence by the dentists? One dentist, with perhaps 40 or 50 years' experience, claimed that it would take 10 years to train what he considers a good laboratory technician. I will tell you this: When a well respected person here,

whose professional ability everybody recognizes, appears before the Committee and gives that as his conclusion, and then at the same time you get a man telling you that when he was 15 years old he was practising dentistry, what is the Committee to do? How many of those who plead their cause would submit themselves and their family to treatment from people of that kind? If a man does not know the terms and meaning of certain things he is using, is there not danger in such a person practising? If that is not so, then I contend that dentistry has no professional status; it is not a profession. I think it has descended from the high pedestal it was on before. Let me say this: We have been contending that the reason for the attack on this report is that the register is sparse; we do not have many people on the Register, and there is great need of such service in the rural areas. There is one man practising in the rural areas. He went away and joined the Army. I know that because I signed his papers. That man returned to the Colony and gave evidence before the Committee. He was asked "Were you allowed to work on patients when in the Army?" "No", he said, "all the work I did was in the laboratory. I was not in contact with the actual operation work". What struck me was that he spoke the truth, as the Dental Department gives you this:

"The dental mechanic or dental technician is one who makes or repairs denture under the instruction of the dentist but does not give any treatment, advice or attendance as indicated in the Practise of Dentistry section 44 of the Dentists Act of 1921".

Even to place a plate in the mouth is a violation of the law. It is claimed that these men have borne the heat and burden of the day and, therefore, should be allowed to practise. If that is the case, let us not fool ourselves. The boys who are going away and spending money, particularly in the present circumstances of the exchange, might well study something other than dentistry, and if they do persist in studying dentistry they should not come back to Brit-

ish Guiana, because they would at least understand that they would be blacklisted in coming back. We have been told that we have not enough qualified men. I would like to know how many have come back within recent times and have had to go away. Why are they going away? It is because they are faced with this unfair competition. You will find men on the Courentyne, men running up and down in cars practising illicitly, although a qualified graduate dentist is practising from New Amsterdam to Skeldon. His brother is a graduate technician, a man who spent two or three years in the United States of America where he qualified. Those two men go up the Courentyne regularly, and yet we hear that the people from Crabwood creek have signed a petition engineered for personal reasons. That is my district and I know it well. I know conditions such as have been made out do not exist. People from Rosehall and further up the coast go to New Amsterdam for medical treatment, and people in a serious condition go to the hospital. What is wrong if there is easy transportation and there are qualified men who go up there? I can tell you that there is a qualified man in Main Street, New Amsterdam, who had established himself at Skeldon and had to leave because there was not sufficient work to keep him occupied there.

We talk about 20 dentists being in this City. I know some very good men have left British Guiana and are practising in Jamaica and other places. You will never find that the offices or the services of those 20 men are all filled or occupied at the same time. If you think the dentist is making a vast amount of money, you are mistaken. If people are satisfied to go to charlatans or quacks it is their business, but it is my business to do justice. Every other profession is made sacrosanct—the great professions of law and medicine. If this is not an indictment of the conscience of this Colony I give it up. I have nothing to do with the men who are practising illicitly. It is the business of the Police.

Even if they are successful to the extent of starving me out, I would go away gracefully. I am sure that with my training I will not descend to some of the things I have seen done, but if the law allows it that is the law's business. I was asked to serve on a Committee, and after we have taken the trouble to give all the care and consideration in arriving at a fair and decent decision, we are told that it is unrealistic, it is biased, it cannot stand scrutiny, it is tissue thin. I have friends, lawyers, who have admitted to me that all they do is to sign documents prepared by their clerks who have been with them for a long number of years. Why do not the lawyers in their largeness of heart and altruism admit those clerks into their Law Society to practise? Let me cite one case. Here is a man, a qualified sicknurse and dispenser, who was an Instructor at the hospital in Berbice. He has just retired from the Service and decided to open a drug store in Georgetown for which he must have a licence as a chemist and druggist. After having served Government for many years and being well versed in the Pharmacopea, he applied for a licence and, though it is known that he can do the work, he could not get it, but it was still felt that he could go into the open sesame of dentistry and be admitted. If this Council makes that decision then it may just as well decree that from this day dentistry is not considered a profession in this Colony, and I shall try my utmost to get away from here as quickly as I can.

If it is going to be suggested that these men must have a special examination because they have borne the heat and burden of the day, have I and other graduates not put up with the same trouble? I want to say that a good many of these graduates have many days had only one meal as students and considered themselves lucky to be in that position. It was not easy. It required determination if you wanted to qualify. Everyone who is a professional man is bound to feel happy at the time when he has qualified. If all of us are to be treated as quacks then let us, the qualified graduates, get out of it. The den-

tal profession is not prepared to pay for justice; we are asking for it because we are entitled to it. We are going to demand that you give us justice, because you have said this is the place for justice. When you go into the Courts of Law you see the scale is being held evenly, indicating the giving of justice. Let every Member of this Council search his mind and ask himself if, in accepting this decision, he is giving justice to the men who have given themselves to study and training as dentists. Apart from the progress of the country what can be the idea for such a step when we have heard the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, say that he has received letters from the Chairman of Golden Gove, West Coast, Berbice,—

The PRESIDENT: What is the hon. Member reading from?

Dr. GONSALVES: I am sorry. It is the "Chronicle" of the 16th April. (Quoting)—

"Mr. Farnum said the letter was signed by the Chairman of Golden Grove, West Coast, Berbice, Lichfield, Belladrum-Eldorado, Flyrish-Gibraltar-Courtland, D'Edward, Bush Lot, Cotton Tree, Rose Hall, Courentyne, Letter-Kenny, Bloomfield, Whim, Manchester, Limlair, Bush Lot (No. 27), No. 57, Nos. 78-79 and Ulverston-Alness-Salton Village Districts."

Sir, I know those men, all of them, and I know the extent of quackery that is practised on the Courentyne Coast. You can see the men, just as by their spots you know the leopards. I am quite sure this statement is not true. As I have told you, all the districts mentioned on the Courentyne are well served.

Mr. FARNUM: I would ask the hon. Member to qualify his statement—whether it is not true that I have received that letter, or whether the statement is not true.

Dr. GONSALVES: I humbly beg your pardon. I say this is what the hon. Member received. I could not be so rude as to suggest that the hon. Member was not speaking the truth; but I say it is still preposterous what he has got,

wherever the lie came from. It is not so because it is my district and I know it. How many men have not established themselves at Rose Hall and had to leave? As I have said, there was a man in Main Street, New Amsterdam, who established a surgery at No. 78 and served the district, travelling up and down by car. I am told that the Chairman there wrote that letter. What I am saying, sir, is that it is peculiar how things can be done. Why these men did not press as vigorously their claims before the Committee? Why did they not show their prowess there to men who know? Are you going to disregard men whose training is bound to make them know—men like Dr. Ho, Dr. Hugh, Dr. Nehaul and the Surgeon Specialist?

Those are the men who gave evidence before the Committee, and they tell you it is dangerous for these men to practise. They tell you that many diseases manifest themselves in the mouth first. It is strange to see what can happen when somebody tells you about it. You yourselves would be afraid. From a mere tooth socket a germ can pass through the passage and get to the lung. Not knowing the dangerous diseases of the mouth, one of those men would remove an instrument from one person's mouth, put it into water, and thinking that by doing so it is sterilized, would put it into another person's mouth. One of the things you can get from that is "trench mouth". If you know it and know the discomfort the patient suffers from it, you would not do that. If you do not know bacteriology you would not know what to do.

Do you think it is fair that this Government should allow people to transfer disease wholesale from one person to another? We talk about health, how to eliminate and remedy all these things, yet at the same time we are advocating this, because it has been done before. I do not see the need to get D.D.T. as this will kill as many people in that way as malaria did. You say you want to make your country

healthy, yet at the same time you still say that these unqualified fellows should be allowed to practise in such and such a place. Who would believe that once a man is licensed to practise, whether halfway or as a mechanic or technician, or whatever he is allowed to practise, would do only that? If he is allowed to practise, then I say you are contributing very largely to the ills of the people of the Colony.

I cannot believe that a man of the intelligence and versatility of the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Luckhoo) would have made such a wanton attack on the reputation of the men who served on the Committee if he had taken the trouble to read and digest the report. He covered his attack by using legal phraseology.

Mr. LUCKHOO: To a point of correction. I made no attack on the member of the Committee. I took great pains to say that I was attacking the report and not the members of the Committee.

Dr. GONSALVES: Again I think that is the legal way, because the mere fact that he says that the report is biased and unrealistic constitutes an attack on the members of the Committee. That is my interpretation of his remark. I have spoken at length but there is much more I can say. I say that these unqualified men are incapable of diagnosing certain diseases. I have said before that I signed this report, and I want to end by saying that I have a letter here from the Colonial Secretary, and if you will permit me, sir, I will read the last paragraph which says:

"His Excellency has requested me to thank you for your services as a member of the Committee, and to say that he has observed with much satisfaction that the Committee's recommendations and conclusions are unanimous".

I take my full share of the responsibility, and if the other members of the Committee feel as I do, there would be no half-way measures adopted in this

matter. If the dental mechanics are prepared to submit themselves to an examination, and having done so they fail to qualify, I think I would be inclined to have some sympathy for them. Let them sit an examination set by the British Council of Dentistry. We owe an obligation to those men to give them an opportunity to qualify themselves, but we owe a greater obligation to members of the profession. When we asked certain of those men why they had not tried to qualify themselves as dentists they said they had no money, but at the same time they boasted of making a lot of money. In conclusion I would say that we of the dental profession are simply asking for justice.

Dr. SINGH: The hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Wight) made certain remarks which purported to suggest that I was retracting after having signed the report of the Committee. I am an old man and I am disinclined to disturb the peace and serenity of this Council. I can assure my hon. friend that I am with him in regard to the report of the Committee, which I think will be very helpful in the future so far as dental mechanics and others are concerned. But my stand here is to make a humanitarian appeal on behalf of those men who have been trained under registered dentists and have practised dentistry for many years—men who have grown old today and have families to support. It is for those men that I am appealing—that instead of lowering the curtain or closing the door we should leave the door ajar so as to allow some of them to earn a livelihood. Those men who are considered to be practising dentistry illegally today are, in my opinion, well qualified. In fact they are better qualified in every way than those who were placed on the register of dentists in 1908 and 1924.

I remember when I returned from India, six of us young men met on the pavement opposite the Magistrate's Court. We were all attached to dentists as office boys. I was qualified as a chemist from India while three of the others

had no vocation. We were told that there was an opportunity for us to become dentists, but I told my friend who is a very good dentist today, that I desired to become a doctor. When I returned to the Colony after qualifying as a doctor I found the other five young men practising dentistry, all enjoying a lucrative practise, and being able to send two of their sons away to become dentists.

There are 43 registered dental practitioners in the Colony today, of whom 28 are actually practising—20 in Georgetown, 5 in New Amsterdam, and 3 in the rural areas. In 1908 there were 100 registered dentists, of whom 3 were graduates. In 1938 there were 7 graduates and 31 non-graduates, so that in 30 years only 4 more graduates came to the Colony. I feel that it is a pity that we ever allowed American-trained dentists to practise in this Colony. Young men who went to the United States of America to study dentistry remained there because of the attraction of the almighty dollar. There is a plenty of money to be made there as compared with a few shillings in this poor Colony. English graduates, both doctors and dentists, are not allowed to practise their profession in the United States of America, and I think the time has come when we should only allow British graduates, to practise in this Colony, because I am sure that Guianese who graduate in England would return to give service to the people of this Colony. In looking forward to American-trained dentists to return to this Colony to relieve the situation we are asking for the moon.

We should consider those dental mechanics who are qualified in every way to help suffering humanity. The population of our Colony is growing; it is over 400,000 today. Imagine three registered dentists serving the entire rural population! Mobile dental units are suggested and will serve a useful purpose, but toothache has no precise hour to attack a person, and it often attacks one at night. People in the rural areas cannot easily come to Georgetown

for dental treatment, therefore we should consider those dental mechanics who are already trained and able to give relief to persons who are in pain. We are trying to do what it took the people of England 1900 years to do. It was only at the beginning of the 20th Century that a dental register was introduced in England. Who were the men who formed the dental schools? They were practical men without any qualifications.

Dr. GONSALVES: I would like my friend to explain how he knows that dental colleges were formed by untrained men?

Dr. SINGH: When the first college was formed where did the Professors come from? Who started the first college? Practical men got together. In America even the barbers have got together and started a University, and in the next five years one will have to be a graduate in order to practise as a barber there. These dental mechanics who have been practising dentistry have been trained under registered dentists and have had long experience, and the fact that they are existing today clearly shows that they have been giving good service to the community.

Dr. GONSALVES: I do not know if I am making a mistake, but I see that the Committee's report has been signed by the hon. Memb .

Dr. SINGH: I prefaced my remarks with the statement that I agreed with the report *in toto* for the future, but that I was making an appeal on behalf of those men who, I feel, deserve assistance, because they have been doing good work, like their predecessors, who had no training. I think these dental mechanics should be recognized. How can we call upon them to pass an examination? We have not the necessary machinery. Government has allowed similar people to practise in the past without any examination, and they are doing good work in the community. It would be impossible for me and other

doctors far younger than I am, to pass an examination today, because we have forgotten our theory. I do not agree that we should call upon men who are practising today to pass an examination. We should encourage our young men to go to the British Isles and qualify themselves, and I feel sure they would come back to us. When I qualified in 1919 I was offered a commission as Lieut. in the South of France, but I refused it although I was told that in six months I would be appointed a Captain. I returned to the Colony and joined the Medical Service. I think others should do the same. After all money is not everything. We owe a duty to the land of our birth. In spite of everything that is stated in this report there is the other side. There is evidence that those 19 men had to prove their case. Their credentials should be examined, and if they are fit and proper persons I feel sure Government would consider their case. The country needs them. We need such men scattered over the rural areas, and if they were allowed to practise I am sure that the quacks who have had no training would disappear.

Dr. JAGAN: I really did not intend to speak on this motion since it may be felt that because I am a dentist I would be taking a personal interest in the matter, but in view of what has been said here during the last few days it does appear that there is a great deal of misunderstanding about this whole matter. I too have been receiving petitions and deputations, but the facts must be stated very clearly. As I stand here I am wondering why I ever went away to study dentistry. I went away in 1936 but it seems to me that all my father had to do at that time was to pay \$400 or \$500 to some registered dentist to train me, and today I would have been qualified to be registered. I am also wondering why, on my return to the Colony, I had my brother working with me for a year as a laboratory assistant before I decided to send him away to the United States of America to stud

dentistry at very great expense. I am sure that if he had spent six years with me he would have acquired more knowledge and information than many of the men who are trying today to get on the dental register. I really should not be objecting to this motion at all, because I have 10 brothers and one sister, and I could train them all within a period of three or four years and post them all over the Colony. I also have several cousins who could be similarly trained, and I feel sure I could give them as good, if not better, training than that received by many of those people who are today attempting to get on the register.

I have listened very carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) who said that some of us who are qualified would not be able to take an examination today because we have forgotten a lot of our theory. I would say that as a medical man he has forgotten almost everything he my have been taught in the medical schools. I do not say it in any way to attack him, but surely, as a medical man he should know that there are such things as Bacteriology, Physiology, Histology and Anatomy which have to be studied, and that a person who wants to qualify for the medical or dental profession is supposed to have a knowledge of those subjects.

Let me come back to the law itself. I know that this issue has now become like a political football, and is being kicked around, but I wish to assure my friends that whenever I feel that a certain thing has to be done, whether it is politics or not, the question of an election does not mean one thing to me. If my constituents feel dissatisfied with my representation in this Council they could turn me out at the next election and I would continue to practise dentistry. In the report of the Committee we find that in 1924 the door was definitely closed against unqualified dentists. It was then said that those men who could not be registered would not be allowed to practise as dentists any more. Subsequently we find that, because of cer-

tain definitions and what not, we were told that certain people had the necessary skill. I will quote from the report which says:

"We refer to this legal definition or interpretation of the practice of dentistry for the reason that we incline to the view that its omission from previous laws created a loophole which enabled certain dental mechanics to acquire legitimately skill and competence of the type which they now claim should qualify them for indulgence in the full practice of dentistry."

Let us examine for a moment the 1924 Ordinance and we will see that those people were supposed to do only what is known as "minor dental work." What is "minor dental work"? In 1922 the Ministry of Medical Services put out a statement which is set out on page 17 of the Committee's report. These are the persons who were permitted to do minor dental work.

(a) a dental student who has received training for at least two years, in dental mechanics and for at least six months in practical operative work—in other words, a student who had got matriculation into a University and had finished two years' laboratory work and at least six months in doing operative work;

(b) a dental nurse who has received a course of instruction approved for the purpose by the Minister after consultation with the Dental Board;

(c) a person employed at the date of the approval of these conditions on minor dental work in the School Medical Service under arrangements approved by the Board of Education.

Then follows what must be done by the registered dentist under whose personal supervision the work is performed—he must always be present when operative work is being carried on; he must not supervise more than two persons at one time if he himself is performing operative work at the same time, or more than six persons at one time if he himself is not so performing; in other words, if there is a clinic dealing with school children at least certain minor dental work must be performed by those people whose names are set out

in the paragraph, and a registered dentist would be supervising their work. Further, the registered dentist must prescribe the treatment to be given and inspect every case after treatment and be responsible for the efficient carrying out of the treatment; in other words, the dentist in charge must say what must be done and what drug are to be administered. Let us look at the definition of "minor dental work" which is set out in the same conditions appearing on page 17 of the Report. It says :

"The approval of the Board of Education must be given to the employment in the School Medical Service of the person concerned, and such approval shall not be given unless the local Education Authority undertake that the work shall be limited to cleaning and polishing, applying or removing dressings or temporary fillings, charting, recording or work of like responsibility."

On page 13 of the Committee's report, paragraph 33 (b) of the extract from a circular issue by the Medical Board is 1928 to all registered dentists states :

"The term 'Minor Dental Work' has been ruled by the Board to include only mechanical denture or laboratory work, not connected with actual operation on the mouth in any way."

One Member has said that this definition of "minor dental work" is not legally correct and, consequently, these people were permitted to carry on a practice over a wide field. But when we consider that in dentistry one can do either one of three things—do all the dental work a dentist is supposed to do, or do minor dental work,—for instance taking out temporary fillings, making charts, removing dressings, etc. under the supervision of a dentist, or do only laboratory work. But what do we find at the present time? We find that an attempt is being made by certain individuals to be allowed to practise dentistry over the whole field. Let us assume that they have acquired experience in minor dental surgery or minor dental work as set out in the Ordinance. If we take the ruling of the local Dental

Board, then they would be only entitled to do minor dental work or laboratory work confined solely to the laboratory. If, on the other hand, we see the definition which is included in the School Medical Service there is a somewhat different situation. Only a trained dental student or a nurse can do minor dental work in a clinic where many children are being treated, and that work is limited to "cleaning and polishing, applying or removing dressings or temporary fillings, charting, recording or work of like responsibility." So even if we stretch the definition of the term "minor dental work" to include that which was allowed for the School Medical Service, as was allowed in Great Britain, we would still find that these people could not have acquired the necessary experience to practise over the wide field of dentistry.

Then the question arises, how should these people be now made to practise over the wide field of dentistry? Some Members suggested,—at least one hon. Member—that these people should be given licences permitting them to practise in the rural areas. Obviously the question to be asked is whether the people in the rural areas must be subjected to a type of treatment which is inferior to that which they may receive from a qualified dental practitioner? Numerous statistics have been quoted in this Council. I myself like to use statistics very much and, therefore, I know the intricacies of the game very well. It was said by one hon. Member that in 1925 there were over 100 dentists in this colony, and today, because we have only 28 on the register, obviously the people are suffering a great deal. Let me exploit that one. Twenty or 30 years ago, or even 40 years ago, the efficiency of a dentist was very much limited to what he can perform today. The dentist of today is almost four or five times as efficient as his counterpart of 30 years ago, because the dentist of today has at his command modern equipment with which he can perform operations more quickly. He has at his disposal dental materials which are

shorten the time of certain operations. I will give one example. Dental practitioners taking an impression many years ago had to use Plaster of Paris for taking partial impression, and sometimes they had to take half an hour to remove that impression and reassemble it, because when that Plaster of Paris became set between the teeth when it is taken out it is broken in several places as the result of the impression going within the spaces of the teeth. Consequently a lot of time is wasted in the operation. Today we have new materials which can shorten the time to less than five minutes.

When we compare figures only of how many dentists were practising one year and today, we cannot say that because the number is less the people are suffering undue hardship today. Another point is that Members referred to the fact that we have in this country nearly half a million people, and we have 20 dentists in Georgetown, five in New Amsterdam and three in the rural areas. It was suggested that because of this distribution the people in the rural areas particularly are not being served. If we break down these figures we find that there is one dentist to approximately 20,000 people in British Guiana. In Georgetown, if we take 20 dentists to be practising for a population of 80,000, we find there is one dentist to 4,000 people. Now it may be said that one to 4,000 is in itself a large proportion, and indeed it is if everyone of those 4,000 people had to go to the dentist regularly. I can tell you that at the present time the people are so poor in this country that they can hardly afford the fee of one dollar for an extraction. Consequently, it is through no fault of their own that many of the people do not get any service and have to go to the hospital and have their teeth extracted, sometimes free and sometimes at a token figure of 24 cents.

Mention was also made that cannot attract American dentists to this country. For the benefit of the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr.

Singh) I would like to point out that within the last five years these dentists have come back to British Guiana—Hona-Kie, Stone, Tallim, Jagan, Agard, Sue-A-Quan, Ng-a-Fook, Fung-a-Fat, and others. Within a short time these men have qualified and returned to British Guiana. It is true he suggested that we should stop allowing American dentists to come into this country. I would like to tell him that however much he pleads the cause of the British dentist, I am not going to say at the present time that English dentists should not be accepted. They are accepted in this country from an English or Irish University, but it is well known, and even accepted in Great Britain itself, that dentistry today has reached its highest standard in the United States of America.

Dr. SINGH: Question!

Dr. JAGAN: When I was in Northwestern University—The hon. Member says "Question!" because he does not know

Dr. SINGH: For the information of this Council I was a dental student myself when I was in Edinburgh. When I started I entered for both dentistry and medicine.

Dr. JAGAN: The hon. Member seems to have forgotten that since his time progress has not stopped. May I mention, sir, that while I was in school there were many dentists from the United Kingdom who had qualified there but went to the United States of America to get post-graduate training. There were students and graduates who were practising in Germany and Japan and had to go to the United States of America to go through two years of training in the same University where I was, so as to get their diploma. In fact there was one student, a Hawaiian and an American citizen, who had got a diploma from Tokyo University Dental School, but before he could be allowed to practise in Hawaii he had to obtain an American degree in

dentistry, and so he had to study two years in the University where I was. So do not let the hon. Member tell us that he questions the course of training in the U.S.A. I am not championing the American training.

Dr. SINGH: I think the hon. Member for Central Demerara ought to know that similarly American doctors go to the United Kingdom and have to study there for several years before they can get an English diploma. They have to pass an examination and are not given the diploma like that.

Dr. GONS LVES: To a point of explanation! I would refer the hon. Member to the fact that if he went to London he would find many of the highly qualified dentists there are American dentists. Whether they have to take an examination or not it does not gainsay the fact that England has admitted that American dentists are the leaders of the world today in dentistry.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. Member for Central Demerara proceed?

Dr. JAGA : As I said, I am not here to say whether the American dentist is really better than his English counterpart or not. I am only trying to show that dentistry today has reached a high standard, as I do think is the case in all professions. In medicine today we know that the standard is higher than it was 50 years ago, the same as in dentistry. Not very long ago when people were extracting teeth it was done by jumping on a man's shoulder and pulling with all your might. That was done until anaesthetic was discovered, and the hon. Member would know that since it was discovered it has been a boon to the medical profession as it was to dentistry, and it was discovered by a dentist. The hon. Member should know that we cannot say that because our grandfathers practised without anaesthetic we must practise so at the present time.

The hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves) made some very good points when he was speaking on

the question of the mouth being a part of the body, and the dental profession being a part of the whole medical profession. Specialists today, Public Health authorities, have come to the conclusion that the mouth is one of the places from which we can have focus infection conveyed to various parts of the body. We can have heart trouble, eye trouble, troubles of the joints from focus infection set up in the mouth. You go to the Eye Specialist today and he looks at your eyes. He sees the whole mouth with crowned teeth and says "Let us have an X-Ray examination to see if these bad teeth you have covered by the crown are responsible for your eyes". Eye Specialists always send them to us. It is said that a crown covers a multitude of sins. In British Guiana another aspect of the situation which has to be very carefully considered is the aspect of training people to accept inferior dentistry. People have been accustomed to accept bad dentistry because of the standard set in the past.

I remember when I was practising in Main Street a fellow came to me. He had very good anterior teeth in his mouth and said he would like to have two open face crowns and two other crowns. I said to him "Your teeth are in very good condition, and people would pay large sums of money to get teeth like yours. You should do nothing to them". He implored me but I did not treat him, and he subsequently left. Four years after, when I moved into another locality he came back to me. The teeth had to be extracted—those on which crowns had been put. The work was not done properly and gangrene and pyorrhoea had set in. The whole thing had to be done over. We have patients coming to us—the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice can tell you—and saying "Doctor, I want to have this tooth pulled". We examine the tooth and say to them "We will give you anaesthetic in order that it would not hurt and will open the tooth to see whether it can be saved and advise you to save it"! Having done all that the patient returns with the answer

"Doctor, I don't want to save it at all". Fillings had been put in and had all dropped out, and therefore they preferred to pull it out.

That is what we have to deal with day by day. It may be said that what difference would it make to allow a few people to go into the rural areas and practise as they would be serving the people. They will give service to the people, it is true, but I can say, not only from my experience but from the experience of others, that in dentistry no service is better than bad service. At the present time we have no Eye Specialist. I wonder if we would recommend any layman to practise in the interim and persons would subject themselves to his treatment? If it cannot be done with the eye, I do not see why it should be done so far as the teeth are concerned. I have been reading a report on nervous paralysis, and it shows that polyopia is caused from nerves which are exposed, nerves which have been subjected to disease and bad treatment. Let us allow these people, someone suggests, to go and practise in the rural areas, then we will have to define what are the rural areas; we will have to define what dentist should go into those areas.

One Member suggested that at the present time there are dentists who are going into the rural areas. Aside from that, most of those persons who are claiming registration today are resident in Georgetown. I would like to know how the rural population has been served in the past by those people. I for one as a dentist would spend most of my time in the rural areas, provided the facilities were there. One knows that it is because of the facilities not being available most dentists are practising in Georgetown. One has to have electrical equipment. One has to have sterilizing equipment to sterilize the instruments, and running water. It is not that these things cannot be provided in the rural areas, but when one considers that to become a trained dentist it costs anything between \$6,000 and \$10,000, when one

considers that to equip a dental office with the necessary modern equipment today costs something in the vicinity of \$3,000 to \$5,000, one will very well realise that a dentist cannot incur other expenses merely to set up practise in the rural areas.

What is the solution? Obviously the report has made very valuable suggestions. Let us set up three mobile units. I can tell Government, that if one was placed at my disposal I myself would practise in the rural areas. It would serve my purpose as a politician. But the only reason I have not done it so far is because it is difficult for me to spend \$10,000 or \$12,000 to acquire a mobile dental unit. But other dentists are setting up part-time practise in the rural areas, and what I would suggest to Government is that in addition to having three mobile units they should provide at every one of their out-stations—Mabaruma, Leguan and Wakenaam—where they have Health Centres or Clinics a room with certain facilities, so that dentists can go and visit those places from time to time.

It is being said that dentists are making fabulous sums of money. I want to assure hon. Members I had to sit many hours in my office and wait until patients came. It is not true to assume that all dentists are busy all eight hours a day. Statistics can be quoted, but often they do not tell the whole truth and the whole story. Many of the dentists today in Georgetown, the names of those I have called, are new people. We know the difficulty of establishing a good practise. It takes a long time. I am sure several of these people, if the opportunity is placed at their disposal, would be glad to have the benefit of a mobile unit to go to some centre where Government has a room with certain facilities.

Another factor which has to be taken into consideration, as the hon. the acting Colonial Secretary and Mover of the motion had suggested, is that in dentistry perhaps the most acute form of treatment is extraction. A man gets

a pain and he has to have an extraction. He also stated that at the present time we have the facilities. Doctors are permitted to perform extractions; sick-nurses and dispensers are allowed too, but we do know that at least these people have had training in certain fields—bacteriology, anatomy, etc. They know what they are about. It must not be concluded that simply because extraction is a simple thing anyone should be allowed to do it. The hon. Member on my left (Mr. Fernandes) has suggested to me that with one action a tooth can be extracted, and especially children's teeth, when they are very loose, can be extracted by means of a string and a door knob. I wonder if we could give the hon. Member a diploma to practise dentistry too? I am not suggesting that the hon. Member is asking for it but I am saying that we dentists know that there are certain teeth which are so loose that they can be extracted by any lay person, but that does not say that all extractions and all surgery should be allowed to be performed by those semi-laymen. The question is where to draw the line, and when to stop this registration of unqualified persons. So far as those persons are concerned, who have acquired a certain amount of skill and are supposed to be competent, I would suggest that Government take a serious view of the situation and give them an opportunity to qualify. Give them a loan or a grant if necessary, as has been done in the case of doctors, and let them go abroad and qualify.

I have heard it said that the people in the rural areas must be served, and statistics have been referred to. What about the doctors? There is also a shortage of doctors. From Skeldon on the Courentyne to New Amsterdam there are only two medical officers. I wonder if those hon. Members who have given figures are satisfied that those two medical officers are providing proper service for the population in that area? Nevertheless, I see the necessity at the present time for Government to do something. At present Government employs one dentist full-time at the Public Hospital, and he pays monthly visits to

various parts of the Colony. I have had to draw the attention of the D.M.S., to the fact that when the dentist is on a visit to the outlying districts the people who go to the Hospital for treatment are neglected. I would suggest that Government should consider those people and employ at least two other dentists so that they could visit the country districts. If necessary, those dental mechanics who have acquired some skill and some knowledge should be encouraged to qualify themselves. I would not object to that, but I certainly would not agree to their being placed on the dental register now to do all phases of dental work.

Not very long ago Dr. Richmond came to this Colony after acquiring a very good education in the U.S.A., and when I asked him why he was leaving the Colony he said that the people here did not require good dentistry. He said that when he suggested to a patient what treatment he should have the patient dictated what treatment he wanted. It is true to a certain extent, and it is because in the past people have been performing services of an indifferent quality—in some cases not because they could not do better but because of the equipment available to them—because they had to indulge in illicit practice of dentistry which, in the long run, did more harm than good.

We have to encourage more qualified dentists to come to this country. We need more dentists as much as we need more doctors, and Government should grant scholarships or loans to people to go away and qualify themselves and return to the Colony. If we allow those dental mechanics who were practising dentistry up to 1939 to be registered we would find others coming forward and asking for an extension. There may be hundreds of others of whose names we are not now aware. We may find that certain persons have had training from dentists who are now dead, and the names of dead persons would recur from time to time. How can Government or any Committee deal justly with such a situation? I suggest that when the

register was closed in 1924 all and sundry were given notice of that fact, and it was only because it was felt that a mistake was made on that occasion that the register was re-opened in 1939. That was a grave error and Government should not commit a similar error.

Mr. CARTER: In my view this is a very grave question, because it strikes at the very root of our health standards in this country. The dentists in this Chamber who have already spoken, have mentioned some of the diseases which can be transferred from one mouth to another, and have also mentioned what result can follow from bad dentistry, and how bad dentistry can ruin the health of patients. From that point of view I think this is a question which should be very closely considered by Members of this Council before coming to a conclusion one way or another. It has been pointed out, and I agree, that the effect of admitting unqualified person to the practice of dentistry would mean the lowering of the standard of dental surgery in this Colony, and again one would have to ask the question whether it is fair to those persons who have spent a great deal of money and expended a great deal of time and energy to qualify as dentists, that on their return to this Colony they should find severe competition from persons who did not have to spend any money at all, or a very small sum, for what training they may have received. Again one must ask whether it is fair to the students who are now being trained in the U.S.A., and possibly in other countries, or whether it would be an inducement to them to return to this country if they knew that all that was necessary for a person to do in order to have his name entered on the dental register in this country was to be associated with a practising dentist in some form or other. One has to look at that side of it.

Then there is the question of our country districts. I think it is true to say that all over the world people in rural areas suffer from a lack of den-

tists. I have lived in some remote part of England and I know that in those parts there was no dentist. If a person wanted dental attention he had to go to the nearest town in order to get it. So that British Guiana is not unique in its lack of this particular social service. As far as I know, the attempt that has been made in Trinidad and Jamaica is not to lower the standard of efficiency in dental surgery but to improve it. I do not know that there is any such claim by dental mechanics in Trinidad or any of the neighbouring West Indian Colonies, to be put on the dental register, nor do I know that the Legislatures in the Caribbean area are attempting to do anything of this kind. However, I am also in sympathy with the 18 dental mechanics who are endeavouring to have the door open to them. A few of them are well known to me. I know that a few of them are efficient, at least in minor dental work. By that I do not only mean polishing of simple fillings and the like, and one wonders whether some kind of solution can be found in order to include those men as practising dentists of the Colony.

We all know that quite a number of them have in fact practised, and are still practising as dentists, and must be giving some form of service by reason of the fact that they are still able to practise, but on the other hand one does not know or cannot assess the amount of distress which many of them may have caused to a number of people in this country. Dentists have told me that on many occasions patients have gone to them with their mouths in a terrible condition because they had gone to some quack who had tried to perform some kind of dental surgery which resulted in complete distress to the patient. All those are factors which we have to consider, and I am sure the solution is not an easy one, because while it is admirable to think that if a number of those dental mechanics were admitted to the register of dentists they would confine their practise to the country districts and relieve the suffering of the people there, I nevertheless feel that it is very

doubtful that they would go into the country districts to practise.

It is necessary, however, that some attention should be given to the people in the country districts, and the report suggests the introduction of mobile dental units which may be a possible solution, but one wonders also whether some attempt should not be made to exercise a certain amount of human sympathy with the few dental mechanic who have acquired skill and proficiency in that profession. If it is agreed that some attempt should be made to put them on the register then, as the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member (Mr. Luckhoo) has said, some theoretical and practical examination should be set, not on the lowest standard but on a fairly high standard—not on a standard that would make them fail the examination but on a standard which would make it possible for them to be able to practise and be reasonably proficient, without a great deal of harm ening to patients. There is a branch of the British Medical Association in this Colony, and I feel that that Association, or some other body of examiners, can hold examinations from time to time to see whether it would be possible for these technicians to qualify, and if they do succeed in qualifying themselves then, in my view, no restrictions at all should be placed upon them as to where they should practise—whether in George-town or in the rural areas.

I have listened to many of the speakers but none has bewildered me more than the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo. He has done an accomplished piece of tight-rope walking, and when I look at the conclusions arrived at on page 20 of the Committee's report I observe that the first conclusion arrived at is:

"1. That the time has now arrived when only dental graduates from approved Dental Colleges should be eligible for admission to the local Dental Register.

The second conclusion reads as follows:

"2 That it would be neither desirable nor practicable to create a special dental registration category enabling locally-trained dental mechanics to practise as dentists in prescribed non-urban areas."

It is difficult to reconcile those conclusions with the speech made by the hon. Member. It is true that, as in other questions that have come before this Council, there has been a great deal of lobbying all around, just as was done recently when the Estimates were before this Council, but I think this type of lobbying can go too far sometimes. I feel that Members of the Council should have an opportunity to form their own conclusion on the evidence that is before them. I do not say it is wrong for persons to put their case to Members of the Council; it is right that they should do so, but I think that in the final analysis Members of Council should always depend upon their own judgment in arriving at decisions in Council.

Mr. PETERS: There is no doubt in my mind that since the occasion of the debate on West Indian Federation no other issue has caused us to subject ourselves to a deeper searching of heart and mind than the issue involved in this motion which has engaged our attention for so many hours. I must confess that it is not very easy to make up our minds in the final analysis as to what is best for our community, but one realizes that this is indeed a very momentous health issue which must be given serious consideration. There is no doubt that a great attempt is being made to regard this debate as a sort of political or electioneering shibboleth which might be used as a test of whether, when the next election comes along, one might be eligible for nomination by one's constituency or by some other constituency. A man who seeks election merely to feather his own nest and make things easy for himself so far as the choice of any particular constituency is concerned should, in the long run, only be regarded as serving himself and not the community of which he is a part. If this is pre-eminently a health issue which must react favourably or unfavourably

on the mortality rate and the morbidity rate of the members of our community, I think that should be the supreme consideration when one is endeavouring to make up one's mind as to what should be done in a matter of such vital importance as this. I have myself been approached as to what might be my attitude in this matter, and I must repeat that it has not been easy to decide which is the right and just thing to do. I find, however, that in the appointment of the Committee which dealt with this question the choice of the personnel was not made loosely. I observe that there were two physicians, two dentists, one barrister and a solicitor—a very representative Committee. The conclusions which have been arrived at—I am sure after due consideration had been given to the entire subject—speak volumes for the wisdom and meticulous care which has been taken by the Committee.

I have a number of friends among the dental mechanics in our community. I know that they have done splendid work, and can do splendid work, and if there are higher heights for them to climb I should be the last to do anything

to prevent them doing so if their success was a matter which concerned them alone, but the question of the health of the community is at stake. I believe in intensive training for whatever vocation one has chosen. In the whole perspective of the dental profession the mechanical side is the lesser. Are such matters as physiology, bacteriology, anatomy and the sterilization of instruments to be lightly thought of when we are going to entrust the dental treatment of persons to unqualified men? It is not only the health of the patient that is involved but the health of the community as a whole. As it is 5 o'clock, sir, I would ask you to take the adjournment now.

The PRESIDENT: If hon. Members would like to do so we might continue and try to conclude the debate this afternoon.

Dr. NICHOLSON. also wish to speak on the subject, sir.

The PRESIDENT: Council will therefore adjourn until 2 p.m. tomorrow.