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# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF ONTARIO:

## Concerning an unjust and unprecedented law which denies you freedom of choice with respect to denture services.

The following is a factual expose concerning recent confrontations between dental technicians who are members of The Denturist Society of Ontario and The Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and The Ontario Dental Association.

The above mentioned confrontations, aside from various newspaper articles, radio and television comments, etc., have taken the form of raids on denture clinics operated by denturists throughout metropolitan Toronto by paid agents of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons accompanied by officers of the Ontario Provincial Police. Acting under the authority of the Ontario Dentistry Act, these raids have as their sole intent the elimination of denturists as a competitive alternative to dentists in the provision of dentures to the public.

Authority for such raids is found in Section 23, Sub-section 10, of The Ontario Dentistry Act which reads as follows:

"UPON INFORMATION ON OATH BY A DULY AUTHORIZED AGENT OF THE COLLEGE THAT HE HAS REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS IN A BUILDING OR PREMISES ANY DENTAL EQUIPMENT THAT IS BEING, HAS BEEN OR IS LIKELY TO BE USED CONTRARY TO THIS ACT, OR THAT ANY PROSTHETIC DENTURE, BRIDGE, APPLIANCE OR THING IS BEING, HAS BEEN OR IS LIKELY TO BE MADE, PRODUCED, REPRODUCED, FITTED, CONSTRUCTED, FURNISHED, SUPPLIED, ALTERED OR REPAIRED, CONTRARY TO THIS ACT, IT IS LAWFUL FOR ANY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, BY WARRANT UNDER HIS HAND, TO AUTHORIZE AND EMPOWER SUCH AGENT OR ANY OTHER PERSON NAMED THEREIN TO ENTER AND SEARCH THE BUILDING OR PREMISES AND EVERY PART THEREOF AT ANY TIME AND FOR THAT PURPOSE TO BREAK OPEN ANY DOOR, LOCK OR FASTENING OF THE BUILDING OR PREMISES OR ANY PART THEREOF, OR ANY CLOSET, CUPBOARD, BOX OR ANY RECEPTACLE THEREIN THAT MIGHT CONTAIN ANY SUCH DENTAL EQUIPMENT, PROSTHETIC DENTURE, BRIDGE, APPLIANCE OR THING".

It must be admitted that the powers described above are extraordinary. They become all the more extraordinary when one realizes that they have been conferred on

a private professional organisation. And what has the exercise of such authority meant to certain people in this Province? A bizarre situation has been created, replete with private investigators, paid informers, and agent provocateurs, whose sole task is to ensure the profession's continued control over all segments of the dental technician's industry.

Simply stated, dentistry holds a monopoly in the provision of dentures—a monopoly which has maintained dental services at a very high premium with the end result that many people are confronted with the choice of either having to pay the exorbitant prices charged by dentists for dentures or simply doing without these necessities of life. This, we contend, is no choice at all!

In response therefore, to a rising demand for denture services at reasonable costs, many dental technicians joined together to form The Denturist Society of Ontario—opened denture clinics in defiance of The Ontario Dentistry Act—offered denture services at one-half to one-third the prices charged by dentists, and proceeded to petition the Government of The Province of Ontario for legislation which would enable them to continue offering their services without fear of reprisals resulting in costly prosecutions.

To appreciate why such a situation has evolved one would have to realize that nearly all dental technicians, prior to becoming denturists, were almost completely controlled by the dental profession. Faced with the realization that most were forced to accept fees for their work which amounted to a mere pittance, when compared to the prices charged to the public by dentists for the product of their craft, and where boycott of their laboratories and consequent economic ruin were almost daily considerations should any entertain thoughts of protesting such treatment to those upon whom they were forced to rely for their livelihood and the reason for the formation of The Denturist Society becomes abundantly clear.

For example, a dental laboratory may receive anywhere from \$35 to \$45 for fabricating a denture on a so-called prescription from a dentist (many dental labora-

tories receive considerably less than this). This same single denture, however, when presented to a patient by his dentist, may cost the patient anywhere from \$150 to \$350 and even higher. How can such a price spread be justified, you may ask. We contend that there is absolutely no justification for what is clearly exploitation of a public need, and well the Ontario Dental Association knows this.

The Committee on the Healing Arts recommended that patients of dentists be shown laboratory charges for dental appliances. The response of the dental profession to this recommendation was most revealing as it served to point up the real motive of many dentists when they insist that they alone should be responsible for dispensing dentures to the public. The Journal of the Ontario Dental Association, September, 1970, had this to say:

"IF IT SHOULD BECOME MANDATORY TO SUBMIT TO THE PATIENT AN ITEMIZED BILL SHOWING CHARGES FOR DENTAL APPLIANCES MOST FEES FOR COMPLETE DENTURES WOULD BE EXTREMELY HARD TO JUSTIFY. THIS COULD INITIATE A DEMAND BY THE PUBLIC TO HAVE DENTURE SERVICES PROVIDED BY LESS QUALIFIED PERSONS. (DENTURISTS) AS IS DONE IN SOME OF THE OTHER PROVINCES OF CANADA".

The foregoing quotation, taken verbatim from the Journal of the Ontario Dental Association, verifies what dental technicians, performing as denturists, have contended for many years—that there is a clear conflict of interest which occurs almost daily in the practise of dentistry. The Denturist Society in a Brief presented to the Minister of Health of the Province of Ontario in the early spring of this year, called attention to this anomalous situation. It was submitted that:

"PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST SURPRISING CUSTOMS PERTAINING TO THE DENTAL PROFESSION IS THE COMBINATION IN PRACTICE BY THE SAME PERSON OF DENTAL SURGERY AND

PREVENTATIVE DENTISTRY WITH THE SUPPLY OF ARTIFICIAL TEETH. ON THE ONE HAND WE HAVE THAT SIDE OF DENTISTRY IN WHICH THE ONE GREAT AIM OF THE DENTAL SURGEON SHOULD BE THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATURAL TEETH, AND THEIR ASSOCIATE TISSUES, AND TO PREVENT, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, THE NEED FOR ARTIFICIAL DENTURES. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS IN THE PROVISION OF ARTIFICIAL DENTURES THAT HE MAKES HIS GREATEST PROFIT. IN NO OTHER BRANCH OF MEDICINE DOES SUCH PRACTICE EXIST."

How then can there be any objections to denturists becoming legal entities in this Province? The dental profession contends that the activities of denturists constitute a health hazard to the people of Ontario. Despite the fact that not one shred of evidence has been adduced before any responsible authority to substantiate such charges, this claim has been made with monotonous regularity over the years. We are obliged therefore to state unequivocally that those persons who have lost some or all of their teeth, through inept or inadequate dental care, have already been crippled. WE DID NOT CREATE THESE SO-CALLED DENTAL CRIPPLES. WE MERELY INHERITED THEM. And the profession of dentistry, assuming as it has the ultimate responsibility for assuring the dental care of the people of this Province, may not escape responsibility for the fact that their numbers are totally inadequate to meet the needs of Ontario's rapidly growing population.

In conclusion, we would say this to you, the reader of this open letter: Governments, like clocks, receive their motion from the people who create them. Your wishes, therefore, should be held paramount by any political party, either holding office or aspiring to hold office. Fully cognizant of this fact, it is the sincere hope of the Denturist Society of Ontario, that the people of Ontario will be moved to express their support for denturists of this Province in order that Ontarians may receive the benefits already accorded to the people of British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba where denturists currently enjoy legal status.

### QUESTIONNAIRE

We would appreciate if you would be kind enough to read the following questions supplying answers where requested, and then return this sheet to us.

## SIMPLY ANSWER YES OR NO

- 1.) Have you had occasion to use the services of a Denturist? .....
- 2.) Do you know of persons who have gone to a Denturist? .....
- 3.) Were you or the persons known to you satisfied with the services? .....
- 4.) In your opinion should Denturists continue to render dental plate services directly to the people of Ontario? .....

- 5.) Check (x) the reasons why you think the services of a Denturist are desirable:

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Time saving                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economy | <input type="checkbox"/> All work unconditionally guaranteed |

You can assure your freedom of choice in respect of dental plate services by contacting your personal representative in the Ontario Government. Please make known your views to your member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Name .....

Address .....

If You Require Additional Information Please Write To:

# DENTURIST SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

104-50 Prince Arthur Ave. Tor.