

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF SOUTH AFRICA *

After the end of World War II, postgraduate students from South Africa found it increasingly difficult to obtain overseas training leading to postgraduate qualification acceptable to the South African Medical and Dental Council for the purpose of the Specialist Register. In Britain, the costs and conditions of living had altered considerably; appointments to resident and other hospital posts were no longer readily obtainable as had been the case in pre-war years; and many medical practitioners could not contemplate the financial burdens involved in an overseas visit for a long enough period for training and qualification.

The higher qualifications offered by the South African medical schools also carried a disadvantage to practitioners who could not afford to undertake the year of full-time work which was demanded by the universities.

It was not only the question of the higher qualification for the purposes of specialist registration that was of concern, but also the matter of postgraduate study, with its climax of a postgraduate diploma, for the purpose of improvement and advancement in professional skill and competence for those who had no intention of becoming 'specialists'.

These were the initial stimuli that, in 1947, led the Association of Surgeons (a group in the Medical Association of South Africa) to consider the formation of a College of Surgeons in South Africa. At about the same time the Secretary of the Medical Association sought to interest individuals in a similar project, and his interest and effort was coordinated with that of the Association of Surgeons. All other specialist groups were invited to cooperate in the production of a constitution that would satisfy all demands; and, at a combined meeting held at a Congress in Cape Town in September 1949, the decision to found a combined College was reached.

A month prior to this resolution, Prof. T. B. Davie, principal of the University of Cape Town, referred, in an address on Postgraduate Medical Education, to the need for a College in South Africa. Arising out of his views, the South African Medical and Dental Council convened meetings of interested bodies to consider various aspects of postgraduate qualification. The late Mr. L. B. Goldschmidt was one of the Medical Association's representatives at the conferences and he made certain recommendations to the Federal Council of the Association.

With these developments, additional advantages likely to accrue from the establishment of a College became apparent. Any decentralization of training occasioned by the stimulus to acquire the diploma of the South African College would necessarily lead to improvement in the standard of practice in the centres

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where training was undertaken. Such improvement might readily spread to a whole district. The improvement would not only involve those who were training but also those who were teaching or aspiring to teach.

The next stage was reached in 1951, when the Federal Council of the Medical Association of South Africa appointed a sub-committee, under the convenership of Mr. L. B. Goldschmidt, 'to establish a College of Physicians and Surgeons of South Africa'. The work done up to this time by the Association of Surgeons was taken over; and, with legal assistance, a draft constitution was drawn up. On this basis, the medical profession was invited to subscribe to the principles of the college.

The sub-committee of the Federal Council completed its work in 1954, and in May of that year, an Inaugural Meeting of the Founders took place. At this meeting it was clear that Founders had given considerable thought to the constitution, and that the different drafts and proposals that had been considered and re-considered over the previous 8 years had led to the crystallization of certain principles of personal disinterestedness in so far as the obtaining by any Founder of spurious academic status from the new College was concerned. The draft submitted to the Inaugural Meeting was extensively and radically amended on these lines; and a Steering Committee was elected to carry out the following:

1. To arrange for a further invitation to the medical profession to subscribe on the basis of the amended constitution and also to permit of withdrawal of those who did not accept the alterations.

2. To register the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the College as a non-profit company.

3. To arrange an election, by ballot, of the first Council of the College from among its approximately 670 Founders.

The College was incorporated under the Companies Act by the Registrar of Companies on 21 July 1955.

The election was held; the Steering Committee retired and the first Council was installed by Sir Walter Mercer, President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, at a special public Ceremony held at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, on 8 August, 1956. The first Council of the College consists of the following personnel: *President*, Prof. G. A. Elliott (Tvl.); *Vice Presidents*, Dr. R. Theron (O.F.S.) and Mr. A. G. Sweetapple (Natal); *Registrar*, Mr. T. B. McMurray (Cape); *Treasurer*, Dr. A. H. Tonkin (Cape); *Librarian*, Mr. A. J. Helfet (Cape); *Chairman of Examination and Credentials Committee*, Mr. Wilfred Kark (Tvl.); *Council Members*, Mr. J. A. Douglas, Dr. M. M. Suzman, Mr. W. H. D. Trubshaw, Dr. Seymour Heymann (Tvl.), Prof. J. F. Brock, Prof. F. Forman and Dr. A. W. S. Sichel (Cape), Dr. B. W. Crowhurst Archer (Natal).

POSTGRADUATE STUDY COURSE: DEDUCTION OF EXPENSES FROM TAXABLE INCOME

The Commissioner for Inland Revenue has addressed the following letter (R.18/343) to the Secretary of the Medical Association of South Africa under date 19 December 1957:

INCOME TAX: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS: DEDUCTION OF EXPENSES IN RESPECT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDY COURSES

'1.0. I set out hereunder particulars of the manner in which it is intended that the provisions of paragraph (s) of sub-section (2) of section *eleven* of the Income Tax Act, 1941, should operate and be applied in relation to medical practitioners. The undermentioned acts which are to be performed by your Association through its local branches in connection with the operation of the paragraph were agreed upon in principle at discussions between representatives of your Association and this Department before the paragraph was inserted in the Act in its present form by section *six* of the Income Tax Act, 1957 (Act No. 61 of 1957), in substitution for the paragraph which was originally introduced into the Act by section *six* of the Income Tax Act, 1956 (Act No. 55 of 1956).

Paragraph (s) of sub-section (2) of section eleven of the Income Tax Act

'2.0. The paragraph, which came into operation with effect from the year of assessment ended 30 June 1957, provides for the deduction in the determination of the taxable income of any dentist or medical practitioner of an allowance in the following terms—

'(s) notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of section *twelve*, so much as the Commissioner may allow of any expenditure incurred by any dentist or medical practitioner in respect of whom the Dental Association of South Africa or the Medical Association of South Africa, as the case may be, certifies in such form as the Commissioner may prescribe that he—

- (i) has practised his profession for not less than three years; and

- (ii) has incurred such expenditure during the year of assessment in respect of the attendance by him of any postgraduate study course approved by such Association, to improve his