LENGULATION IN ANÄSTHETICS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In his letter which appeared in THE LANCET of March 26th last Dr. Blumfeld very properly draws the attention of the profession to the proposed amendment by the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England to the important legislative recommendations of the General Medical Council. As Dr. Blumfeld points out, the suggestion of the Council of the College that registered dental practitioners should be permitted to administer certain scheduled anaesthetics for operations other than those of dental surgery would, if carried into effect, bring about one of the very evils which the General Medical Council is endeavouring to remedy—viz., the assumption by those who have received only a partial medical and surgical training of responsibilities and duties which can only be discharged satisfactorily by those who have passed through the full medical and surgical curriculum. I must confess that I am at a loss to understand such a suggestion, and I am glad to observe in the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council held on Feb. 21st last (p. 25) that this committee was unable to agree to the proposal.

The following is the resolution passed by the Executive Committee on the occasion of a communication from the Lord President of the Privy Council submitting the amendment proposed by the Council of the College, the words proposed to be omitted and added being those used by the General Medical Council in the legislative recommendations they forwarded to the Lord President of the Privy Council restricting registered dentists to the use of certain scheduled anaesthetics in dental surgery:

'That the Lord President be informed that the words proposed to be omitted were inserted advisedly by the Council, and in the opinion of the Executive Committee it is desirable in the public interest that they should be retained. The Executive Committee would point out that cases may occur in which, during the course of medical or surgical operations, commenced under anaesthesia produced by nitrous oxide or other specified or specified preparation, it is found necessary at a later stage to resort to more potent anaesthetics such as chloroform or ether. In such cases it might endanger the patient's safety, and the success of the operation, if the anaesthetist possessed only of a dental qualification were for some reason unable to continue the administration of the anaesthetic, and if, as I trust, it would be no more difficult to register anaesthetists than to register dental practitioners, there can be no doubt that their scheme to allow registered dentists to administer certain of the least toxic general anaesthetics in dental surgery is deprived of much, if not most, of its objections by the important reservation that, save in the most exceptional circumstances, the administration of the anaesthetic and the performance of the operation shall not be undertaken by the dental practitioner alone. The responsible and legislative recommendations of the General Medical Council deserve the unqualified support of the whole profession. They certainly meet the difficulties and requirements of the situation as well as they can be met and if, as I trust, a great deal of progress in this matter will be rendered. I am, Sir, yours faithfully.'

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I think that most medical men who have had much experience of work in connexion with the Workmen's Compensation Act will agree with Mr. Albert Bennett's strictures on the conduct of a small number of medical men who are constantly in evidence in such cases. These gentlemen are well known to the public from the notices which appear in the medical journals. They certainly meet the difficulties and requirements of the situation as well as they can be met and if, as I trust, a great deal of progress in this matter will be rendered. I am, Sir, yours faithfully.'

FREDERIC HEWITT.

London, April 5th, 1910.

ACCIDENT CLAIMS AS AFFECTING THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

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