Sixty-five pieces of silver

It has been some months since an editorial moratorium was declared concerning the California conspiracy. Every negative aspect of this problem has been explored and re-explored. There are, however, in distressing situations, facets that can be used by the offended which are positive, affirmative, and aggressive.

To those who have studied the problems posed by the “unification program” in California, the goal of organized medicine is crystal clear: the establishment of a monolithic agency that speaks for medicine. This has become even more apparent in recent weeks, when a leading medical educator released a “trial balloon” suggesting the merger of dentistry and medicine. Writing in the March 1962 issue of New Medical Material, William N. Hubbard, Jr., M.D., dean of the University of Michigan Medical School, made such a proposal.

In the rush to consummate the California unification of M.D.’s and D.O.’s, organized medicine has made some rather amazing admissions, admissions which can be useful to the osteopathic profession in many areas of activity.

When the first D.O. degree is “exchanged” for an M.D., organized medicine has in fact affirmed what they have long denied—a D.O. degree represents training at least equivalent to that represented by an M.D. degree. Never again can organized medicine with any semblance of authority state that a D.O. degree represents inferior medical training. The facts just will not support such a statement, nor will the action being taken by the A.M.A. and the C.M.A.

This is important. It is important to state legislatures which in the future may consider unlimited practice rights. It is important to those seeking recognition at any level.

It is apparent that the California College of Medicine (formerly the College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons) is to be an “approved medical school” with a speed which must be amazing, particularly to medical educators. To many doctors of medicine, the $65.00 fee for the M.D. degree must appear quite reasonable. Medical schools should be encouraged by the new economic approach to medical education. Perhaps organized osteopathy should reciprocate with a $65.00 D.O. degree for interested doctors of medicine.

Another peripheral development in this procedure is the fear which has developed in some medical circles that the new M.D.’s (converted D.O.’s) may suddenly get the idea of using both degrees and imply to the public that their $65 M.D. degree represents about $10,000 worth of D.O. training. In California, of course, proposed legislation, if enacted, will prohibit the use of the more time-consuming and expensive earned degree.

The idea that the public might consider osteopathic physicians as practicing “medicine plus” has frightened organized medicine. In fact, at the last meeting of the A.O.A.-A.M.A. Conference Committee, the A.O.A. representatives were urged to seek official denial from our House of Delegates. It was an amazing display of unsuspected inferiority on the part of political medicine.

Perhaps there are mounting reasons to question the value of even a $65.00 M.D. degree. Could it be that medicine is more desirous of eliminating the growing acceptance of the D.O. degree than it is of “converting” D.O.’s to its fraternity? Could it be that the D.O. degree which organized osteopathy has established as equivalent to an M.D. is actually exceeding its equivalency status? Could it be that the D.O. degree has greater public acceptance than an approved M.D. degree now priced at bargain rates? And could it be that the D.O. degree, in the public mind, is being recognized as a symbol of a superior form of medical training?

Organized medicine, by its support of the California action, has established once and for all the equivalency status of the two degrees. Perhaps now is the time for us to establish further the superiority of the training of osteopathic medicine.

Regardless of the expedient actions of medical education in furthering the apparently monopolistic goals of organized medicine, osteopathic education must never be guilty of “selling” its degree through some form of political prostitution. Despite this new trend in “medical education,” osteopathic education must continue to raise its educational stand-
Vox populi

Predictions of future events have long enticed the minds of men. Man, through the ages, has invoked spirits, gazed into crystal balls, and conjured up all manner of gadgets and gimmicks for revealing the future. Modern man, however, turns to statistical study and scientific methods. Organizations have been formed that can with amazing accuracy predict the mood of large masses of people. One of the outstanding organizations in this field is Facts Consolidated, with offices in key areas in the United States and Europe. Through years of experience, this organization has developed an outstanding degree of accuracy in public opinion studies.

Ever since the proposed merger between the California Medical Association and the California Osteopathic Association came out in the open, the American Osteopathic Association has been interested in the reactions of the public in California. To find what they are, the A.O.A. turned to Facts Consolidated. To accomplish the purposes of the study, a sampling plan was developed, quota controls were established, and field work was assigned to sixty Facts Consolidated interviewers. Using the "face-to-face" method, almost 3,000 interviews were conducted from January 31 to February 5 of this year.

A recent release on the findings is most interesting. Contrary to some reports, the people of the State of California are not convinced of the wisdom of the proposed merger. One third of all those interviewed were opposed to the merger agreement which would absorb osteopathic physicians into the medical association and give all osteopaths who elect to take it an M.D. degree. Approximately another third are in favor of the merger agreement, and the remaining third expressed no opinion. More than 62 per cent of those interviewed were opposed to ending the licensing of osteopathic physicians in California. Of the remainder, only 10 per cent were in favor of the proposal, while 27 per cent had no opinion. However, the most important finding of this investigation was that over 75 per cent of the approximate one third who favored the merger agreement were opposed to the proposal to end the licensing of osteopathic physicians in California.

As a means of testing meaningful distribution of its sampling, Facts Consolidated made a comparison of party affiliations of those interviewed and of voters registered in California as of November 1960. At that time there were 7,464,626 voters, of whom 39.2 per cent were Republicans, 57.5 were Democrats, and 3.3 refused to identify their political affiliation. In the survey, 38.2 per cent of those interviewed were Republicans, 57.3 were Democrats, and 4.5 refused to state their party affiliations.

Approximately half of each interviewer’s quota was male and half female. Interviewers were instructed to complete their quotas in such a manner as to obtain proper representation of socioeconomic, racial, religious, and urban-rural differences. It is important to point out that no control of political party affiliation was imposed either in the geographic sampling or on the quota restrictions imposed on the interviewers. However, as stated above, the political make-up of the sampling was strikingly similar to that of registered California voters. Certainly this fact, among others, indicates the reliability of the methods used.

Although the findings of this survey are encouraging, they should in no way lessen the efforts of organized osteopathy in its fight for survival in California. The people must be further alerted to the dangers of a medical monopoly in California or in any other state of the Union. Physicians the