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Editorial

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A. P. RICHARDSON, *Editor*

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EDITORIAL

Accountants and the New York Stock Exchange

The highly important conversations between the committee on stock list of the New York Stock Exchange and accountants, growing out of the activities of the American Institute of Accountants' committee on coöperation with stock exchanges, continue to develop rapidly. In order that the record may be reasonably complete we quote the following letter which was addressed by Richard Whitney, president of the exchange, to every corporation whose securities are listed:

"The New York stock exchange has recently announced its intention of requiring audited statements in connection with listing applications made after July 1, 1933. The public response to this announcement indicates clearly that independent audits are regarded by investors as a useful safeguard.

"If, however, such a safeguard is to be really valuable and not illusory, it is essential that audits should be adequate in scope and that the responsibility assumed by the auditor should be defined. The exchange is desirous of securing from companies whose securities are listed, and which now employ independent auditors, information which will enable it to judge to what extent these essentials are assured by such audits. In furtherance of this end, we should be greatly obliged if you will secure from your auditors, upon the completion of the audit for the year 1932, and furnish to the committee on stock list, for its use and not for publication, a letter which will contain information on the following points:

"1. Whether the scope of the audit conducted by them is as extensive as that contemplated in the federal reserve bulletin, *Verification of Financial Statements*.

"2. Whether all subsidiary companies controlled by your company have been audited by them. If not, it is

desired that the letter should indicate the relative importance of subsidiaries not audited, as measured by the amount of assets and earnings of such companies in comparison with the total consolidated assets and earnings, and should also indicate clearly on what evidence the auditors have relied in respect of such subsidiaries.

"3. Whether all the information essential to an efficient audit has been furnished to them.

"4. Whether in their opinion the form of the balance-sheet and of the income, or profit-and-loss, account is such as fairly to present the financial position and the results of operation.

"5. Whether the accounts are in their opinion fairly determined on the basis of consistent application of the system of accounting regularly employed by the company.

"6. Whether such system in their opinion conforms to accepted accounting practices, and particularly whether it is in any respect inconsistent with any of the principles set forth in the statement attached hereto.

"I shall personally appreciate very much your prompt consideration of this matter and any coöperation which you may extend to the exchange in regard thereto."

The letter was accompanied by a statement prepared by the Institute's special committee on coöperation with stock exchanges. The text of that statement appeared in *THE JOURNAL OF ACCOUNTANCY* for March, 1933.

**Accountants Send
Reply**

A group of accountants comprising several firms whose clientele embraces listed companies prepared a joint response to Mr. Whitney's letter. This group had not and did not claim any official status, but it is believed that the views which were expressed by these accountants will be endorsed by practically all members of the profession. The text of the letter addressed to the stock exchange by this group reads as follows:

"As auditors of a substantial number of corporations whose securities are listed on the New York stock exchange, we have received copies of the letter in relation to audits addressed by you to such companies under date of January 31. We are anxious to do everything in our power to assist the exchange, and it has seemed to us that it will be helpful and more convenient to the exchange for us to deal with some of the general phases of the subject under consideration collectively in a single letter, reference to which will make it unnecessary to discuss these points in the letters which we shall in due course furnish to our clients and

which they in turn will presumably furnish to the exchange for its confidential use.

"We fully recognize the importance of defining the responsibility of auditors and of bringing about a proper understanding on the part of the investing public of the scope and significance of financial audits, to the end that their importance should not be underrated nor their protective value exaggerated in the minds of investors. This is the more necessary because the problem of delimiting the scope of audits or examinations is essentially one of appraising the risks against which safeguards are desirable in comparison with the costs of providing such safeguards. The cost of an audit so extensive as to safeguard against all risks would be prohibitive; and the problem is, therefore, to develop a general scheme of examination of accounts under which reasonably adequate safeguards may be secured at a cost that will be within the limit of a prudent economy. The position was clearly stated by a partner in one of the signatory firms in 1926 as follows:

"In any such work we must be practical; it is no use laying down counsels of perfection or attempting to extend the scope of the audit unduly. An audit is a safeguard; the maintenance of this safeguard entails an expense; and this expense can be justified only if the value of the safeguard is found to be fully commensurate with its cost. The cost of an audit so extensive as to be a complete safeguard would be enormous and far beyond any value to be derived from it. A superficial audit is dangerous because of the sense of false security which it creates. Between the two extremes there lies a mean, at which the audit abundantly justifies its cost.'

"We are in accord with the general concept of the scope of an examination such as would justify the certification of a balance-sheet and income account for submission to stockholders which is implied in the reference to the bulletin *Verification of Financial Statements* contained in the first question asked by the exchange. That bulletin was designed primarily as a guide to procedure which would afford reasonable assurance that the financial position of the borrower was not less favorable than it was represented by him to be; and as the bulletin explicitly states, it was not contemplated that such an examination would necessarily disclose under-statements of assets (and profits), resulting from charges to operations of items which might have been carried as assets, or defalcations on the part of employees.

"This latter point is particularly applicable to financial examinations of larger companies which, generally speaking, constitute the class whose securities are listed on the New York stock exchange. Such companies rely on an adequate system of internal check to prevent or disclose defalcations, and independent accountants making a financial examination do not attempt to duplicate the work of the internal auditors.

"The bulletin *Verification of Financial Statements*, to which reference has been made, was, as was clearly pointed out in the first edition, framed to fit the case of borrowers engaged in business on a relatively small or medium-sized scale. It was recognized in that bulletin (see paragraph 131 of the present edition) that an effective system of internal check would make some portions of the procedure outlined in the bulletin unnecessary. Naturally, the larger a corporation and the more extensive and effective its system of accounting and internal check, the less extensive is the detailed checking necessary to an adequate verification of the balance-sheet. Since companies listed on your exchange are among the larger corporations, it is in general true that the procedure in examinations of annual accounts is less detailed in the case of those companies than in the class of cases which the framers of the bulletin had particularly in mind. It is, however, true, we think, that the examinations made by independent auditors in such cases, coupled with the system of internal check, constitute at least as effective a safeguard as is secured in the case of smaller corporations having a less adequate system of internal check, in the examination of which the procedure outlined in the bulletin has been more closely followed.

"The ordinary form of financial examination of listed companies, in so far as it relates to the verification in detail of the income account, is not, we believe, so extensive as that contemplated by the bulletin. To verify this detail would often be a task of a very considerable magnitude, particularly in the case of companies having complex accounting systems, and we question whether the expense of such a verification would be justified by the value to the investor of the results to be attained. The essential point is to guard against any substantial overstatement of income, and this can be reasonably assured by the auditor satisfying himself of the correctness of the balance-sheets at the beginning and end of the period covered by his examination, and reviewing the important transactions during the year.

"The second point on which information is requested in your letter to listed companies relates to subsidiary companies. This question is obviously pertinent, and presents no difficulty to the accountant called upon to reply to it.

"The third question, calling for a statement whether all essential information has been furnished to the auditors, contemplates, we take it, that the auditors shall indicate whether all the information which they have deemed essential and sought has been furnished to them. It is obviously conceivable that a management might be in possession of information which would have a material bearing on the accountant's view of the financial position if he knew of its existence, but that the auditor might have no way of discovering that such information existed.

"Your fourth question relates to the form in which the accounts are submitted. We take it that you desire to be informed

whether the accounts in the opinion of the auditor set forth the results fairly to the extent that they purport to do so, and that the inquiry does not go to the question whether regard for the interests of the stockholders calls for more detailed statements of the financial position and the operations of the company than those now given. The question how much information should be given to stockholders is one on which wide differences of opinion exist, and it is not our understanding that the exchange is attempting to deal with this point in this inquiry.

"Referring to the fifth question—we attach as great importance as the exchange evidently does to consistency of method in the presentation of financial statements by corporations. The only further comment on this question which seems called for is to emphasize the part which judgment necessarily plays in the determination of results, even if principles are consistently adhered to. There would, we take it, be no objection to an accountant answering the fifth question in the affirmative, even though in his opinion the judgment of the management had been somewhat more conservative at the close of a year than a year earlier, or vice versa. We think it well to mention this point and to emphasize the fact that accounts must necessarily be largely expressions of judgment, and that the primary responsibility for forming these judgments must rest on the management of the corporation. And though the auditor must assume the duty of expressing his dissent through a qualification in his report, or otherwise, if the conclusions reached by the management are in his opinion manifestly unsound, he does not undertake in practice, and should not, we think, be expected to substitute his judgment for that of the management when the difference is not of major importance, when the management's judgment is not unreasonable, and when he has no reason to question its good faith.

"Your sixth question, apart from the specific reference to the principles enumerated, aims, we assume, to insure that companies are following accounting practices which have substantial authority back of them. Answers to this question of an affirmative character will not, of course, be understood as implying that all of the clients of a given firm observe similar or equally conservative practices, either in the case of companies engaged in the same industry, or in the case of different industries, or even that the accounting principles adopted are precisely those which the accountant would have himself selected, had the sole choice rested with him.

"We agree with the five general principles enumerated in the memorandum attached to your letter, but it may, we suppose, be understood that rigorous application of these principles is not essential where the amounts involved are relatively insignificant. We mention this point not by way of any substantial reservation but to avoid possible later criticism based on narrow technicalities.

"We shall be glad, if desired, to go further into any of the questions herein discussed, in such way as may be most convenient to the exchange."

No doubt there will be other communications addressed by accountants to the exchange, and it is hoped that the correspondence will be carried further, so that there may be a full discussion of the more important points which arise in the relationships between the general public, accountants and the exchange.

**Double-Edged
Legislation**

During a recent session of a state legislature a bill was introduced providing that all companies whose securities were offered for sale within that state should be audited by certified public accountants of that state, maintaining an office in that state, and should be subjected to annual audit thereafter. This bill passed both houses of the legislature and reached the governor, but fortunately it was recalled to the senate and there it remained until the legislature adjourned, and no action was taken. This bill is said to have been copied in one or two other states and it seems to have met with the approval of the accountants engaged in local practice there. Consequently it is of some importance to consider whether or not legislation of this type is desirable from every point of view and then from any point of view. There is much to be said in favor of legislation which will help to protect the public from unwise investment and, from a strictly selfish point of view, it appears desirable to provide work for residents of a state; but the matter is not so simple as that would indicate. There are greater considerations and there are dangers inherent in any such legislation which may have been overlooked in the first flush of enthusiasm. They should not be forgotten, however, before it is too late. In the instant case the peril of unwise legislation has been averted, but some of the arguments which might induce accountants in any locality to favor such legislation are so specious that they may deceive. Accordingly we have asked permission to publish the following letter which discusses the whole problem and adduces cogent reasons why legislation of this character should be enacted only with due regard for all the factors concerned. The letter was written to the governor of the state in which this bill was introduced and it is signed by one of the leading members of the profession. We are purposely omitting names because we wish

to keep the consideration of this question entirely separate from either locality or personality. The letter follows:

"My attention has been drawn to a bill pending in the _____ legislature (house bill —) providing for audits of accounts of companies whose securities are offered for registration by qualification for sale in the state of _____. It seems evident that such legislation is likely to be enacted in various states, and it is therefore extremely desirable that the form of legislation adopted in the states which first deal with the problem should be of a character best suited to protect investors.

"The subject with which the bill deals is one in which I have been interested for many years; and, although my entire business life has been spent in the accounting profession, I think I can regard it in an objective way, especially as I do not feel that there is any reason why such firms as mine should encourage legislation of this kind. Public opinion will, I am confident, create a demand for auditing services adequate to provide ample occupation for competent practitioners for some years to come.

"The need for legislation seems to me to arise from the fact that while audits are now performed in connection with the great majority of reputable flotations, this protection is not afforded in the case of less reputable issues. The danger of such legislation lies in the fact that it may enable the less reputable promoter to attribute to the audits made in compliance therewith a significance greater than they would, in fact, possess. Such exaggeration of significance may arise in one of two ways.

"Investors are only too prone to regard balance-sheets and income accounts as positive and indisputable statements of fact, whereas, owing to the complexities of modern business, they can in reality be no more than estimates based on assumptions, some of which rest on accounting conventions and others on the judgment of individuals. To meet this point, legislation should prohibit any accounting report from being put forward as anything other than an expression of opinion, while doing all that it can to insure that the opinion will be honest, competent and based on an adequate knowledge of the facts.

"Investors may also be led to attribute undue significance to audited statements through unwarranted assumptions as to the value of the opinion of the particular auditor. There is no way in which a statute can insure that the auditor selected shall be competent and trustworthy: it can do no more than require that he shall have the qualifications necessary to secure authority to practise under state laws. It is therefore highly desirable that legislation should make it clear that the state assumes no responsibility for the competence or trustworthiness of the auditor, such as, for instance, is implied in the language of section — of house bill — as it passed second reading in the senate: 'Every such audit shall be made by a reputable practising accountant or

firm or partnership of accountants . . . recognized as competent and responsible by the _____ commission.'

"I should like to say a word in regard to the scope of the examination which any such legislation should contemplate. The house bill speaks of a 'detailed audit,' but such a requirement, in my judgment, goes far beyond the necessities of the situation. What I think is required is such an examination as will enable the auditor to express a fully informed opinion concerning the profits for the period covered by the examination and the financial position of the applicant at the close of the period. It is undesirable to burden industry with the expense of more complete examinations than are reasonably required for the protection of investors. Since subsidiary companies form such an important part of modern business practice, provision should be made for including all such companies in the examination.

"Legislative proposals of this sort inevitably raise questions regarding the relative interests of firms of accountants doing a nation-wide business and those of a more local character. I feel that both types of firms are essential to a healthy development of the profession, and my firm has adopted as a settled policy the principle that it does not desire to expand its practice at the expense of local practitioners. Holding these views, I was glad to observe that the amendments of the house bill eliminated the provision whereby the audits were required to be made by certified public accountants of [name of state].

"If legislation of the character of the house bill were enacted generally in all of the states, the inevitable result would be that, as vendors of securities usually desire to offer them in a number of states, they would turn naturally to accountants able to qualify in a number of states rather than to those practising only in a restricted territory. Firms engaged in nation-wide business would be compelled to qualify in all the principal commercial states. If in order to qualify it were necessary to have an office in a particular state, the further result would be to bring such firms into direct competition with local practitioners for the purely local work with which, at present, they are not in any way concerned. For these reasons, I am convinced that legislation of a restrictive character, such as proposed by the house bill, while at first sight it might seem to be in the interest of the local accountant, would ultimately tend to divert business to the firms engaged in nation-wide practice—a tendency which I feel would not be in the best interests of the profession or of the public."

The End of a Vigil A man who sits by the bedside of a very sick friend hopes and prays that the illness may pass and the patient recover. He may have grave doubts and at times may utterly despair, but so long as any flicker of life remains he continues to hope and pray. But when the

worst has happened and the vigil is ended the watcher arises, squares his shoulders and says, "Thank God, that is over. I did my best to save my friend, but I need no longer distress myself about his condition or his suffering." In some such state of mind the people of America are saying, "We hoped that our financial friend could survive the serious illness which beset him, but our hopes were vain and now that he is dead we must find a better man to take his place. We must so guide and train this successor that there will never be any danger of his falling into the evil ways which led to his predecessor's undoing." It has been remarkable throughout the crisis of the last month to witness the nonchalance, the lack of excitement, with which the people contemplated the closing of all the banks. Everyone seemed relieved that the worst had happened. There seemed to be no possibility of any deeper depths and so everyone seemed to say, "Cheerio, now we can start afresh."

What Is the "Gold Standard?"

One of the remarkable things about the whole situation has been the uncertainty as to exactly where we stood. Some have said that we were off the gold standard. Others have said that we were not off the gold standard. And nobody yet knows whether we were or we were not. Of course it is dangerous to attempt to comment upon conditions which are in a state of flux. Notes which are written on the fifteenth day of the month to be published on the first day of the month following are not safe vehicles of prophecy in such troublous times, but venturing, even in such conditions, an opinion, it may be said that the prospects are brighter today than they have been for many a day past. We know now what we did not know assuredly before. This question of the gold standard, however, seems to have led to a great deal of confusion. Because the gold window of the federal reserve bank was closed and one could not receive immediately gold bullion for gold certificates, we were informed that the gold standard had been deserted. But that does not seem to be true. No one who has any knowledge of America really doubts that within a few months at the latest he can receive gold dollars, if he want them, for every dollar of gold certificates. It is more like changing from a demand loan to a time loan. The gold certificates bear on their face the words "on demand." Well, it has been decided that the purport of those words shall be somewhat extended, but that is

not to say that for every dollar of certificate there will not be in the very near future a dollar of gold available. As a matter of fact, no one uses gold as a medium of exchange, except in theory. We have gone on for many years calmly believing that we could receive gold whenever we wanted it. Now some one has told us that we must wait a few weeks before we can receive the gold that we have never wanted to receive before. It is something like the prohibition laws which made some people thirsty simply because it was illegal to quench a thirst in the ancient manner. Probably if every bank in the country would pay out gold for a few days people would be tired of carrying it about and would bring it back again. This is another way of saying that our potential departure from the gold standard is purely a matter of psychology. At any rate whether technically we are on or off the gold standard it will be found in the long run to have been a small price to pay if out of all this uncertainty and financial chaos some one will arise to lead us to a sound banking system.

**Branch Banks Not
Necessarily Devilish**

Perhaps we shall get away from the silly idea that a branch bank is an outpost of hell. The English and the Canadians have passed through strenuous times like all the rest of us, but their banks have stood up. We have had more bank failures in the United States than there are banks in Great Britain. And so far as our records go there have been no bank failures, of any importance at any rate, in Great Britain and none at all in Canada. We pointed out a few months ago that Frank A. Vanderlip had ascribed 90% of the bank failures to bad management, not to the depression. Accordingly, if that be true, what we need is a banking system which will prevent bad management, and that can not possibly be assured so long as any group of three or four men sitting around a country grocery-store stove can decide to create a bank, can create it and carry it on without the slightest knowledge of banking. What some of our bankers do not know is terrifying. Perhaps from now on there will be new laws which will prohibit the establishment of banks by amateurs. We do not permit every Tom, Dick and Harry to practise medicine or accountancy or law. Why then should we tolerate the inefficiency, inexperience and often worse which characterize so much of our banking? Probably seventy-five per cent. of the banks in the country could be abolished for the general benefit of

mankind. There are countless little neighborhoods in which two or three banks struggle in competition, where one bank would be more than enough to attend to all the requirements of the community. In large cities there are many more banks than are needed; and so throughout the country there has developed a mass of banking institutions quite out of proportion to the needs and founded in large part upon nothing more trustworthy than an ambition to be a banker.

**Accountancy in the
New Day**

Out of this chaos also there will doubtless come a better knowledge of accounts and accountancy. The public which has been suffering cheerfully, but suffering nevertheless, will want to have assurance that hereafter there shall be a better supervision and a greater knowledge of the affairs of all the institutions which have to do with the handling of the public's money. Accountants can play a great part in this new era which we all hope is about to dawn—if the break of day has not already begun to show. There has been evidence of great advancement in the public conception of the value of accountancy, and the prospects are that as we settle down to the routine of rebuilding there will be an even greater evidence of a demand for facts presented so that all who are concerned may understand them. And here is where the accountant, if he take advantage of his great opportunity, can render an incalculable service to his fellow men.

**Eligibility of
Candidates**

One of the chief problems which confronts state boards of accountancy throughout the country is the determination of who shall be and who shall not be considered eligible for examination preliminary to the granting of certified-public-accountant certificates. Most of the laws are reasonably clear upon the definition of eligibility, but peculiar circumstances often give rise to applications for examination from persons who feel that they are really entitled to apply and yet have not the statutory qualifications. As an illustration, a recent experience in the state of Minnesota is apt. There the state board of accountancy has been in communication with the attorney general on a question of admitting to examination men who were employed as examiners in the office of the state comptroller. These men, no doubt, had experience which was of the utmost value to them, and they were probably

quite well qualified to undertake accounting work, but that is not to concede that they were qualified under the law as public accountants. The word "public" has been very much misconstrued—often quite innocently. Its meaning in the vocabulary of accountancy should not leave any uncertainty. Men who are employed on salaries in the office of a state comptroller are not public accountants in the strict sense of the word. They are not engaged in a professional capacity. They may be much better men than those who are in public work, but that has no bearing upon the question. The plain truth is that no one except a man who is, or intends to be, in practice as a public accountant, maintaining an office and holding himself available for professional engagement by any reputable client, should have the slightest use or desire for a certified-public-accountant certificate. It is really of no more use to a man not in practice than a degree in medicine would be to an architect or an engineering degree to a clergyman. Public accountancy is a realm by itself and only those who are engaged in it can have any logical excuse for desiring certification. There is, however, always the danger of political influence, particularly in the case of employees in public departments, and that was the difficulty which arose in Minnesota. At the beginning of the discussion the attorney general rendered an opinion that was not in harmony with the views of the state board of accountancy. That board persisted, however, and the decision has been reviewed and reversed.

**Public Service Not
Public Accountancy**

The *Bulletin* of the American Institute of Accountants, published January 16, 1933, contained the latest opinion of the

attorney general of Minnesota. The following excerpts are of peculiar interest:

"The meaning of the term 'public accountant' seems to be well established. No matter how wide the scope of an accountant's employment may be, so long as he is in the hire of a private employer and does not accept retainers or engagements from the general public as an independent public accountant, he can not be said to be acting either as a public accountant or as an assistant to a public accountant. While the work of the state examiners is very wide in its scope and while undoubtedly persons doing such work may possess as great or greater qualifications than others who are working as public accountants, we, nevertheless, believe that the term 'public accountant' can not be construed so as to include one who is employed solely by the state of Minnesota under the language of the statute."

The opinion then recites briefly the history of a case in 1912 when an action in mandamus against the state board of accountancy

was instituted to compel it to permit an accountant, who had acted for three years as the comptroller of the city of St. Paul, to take the examination. The attorney general of that day maintained that the applicant was not entitled to take the examination, as his work as comptroller was not public accountancy. The opinion of the attorney general was sustained by the district court of Ramsay county. This decision was never appealed. The present opinion then proceeds:

"I am of the opinion that our opinion of March 24, 1932, should be withdrawn. You are therefore advised that the chief examiner and other examiners in the public examiner's division of the state comptroller's office do not, by reason of three years' employment in their office, obtain the right to take the examination for certificates as certified public accountants."

This interpretation of the law by the attorney general of Minnesota seems to be absolutely just, and it will no doubt constitute a valuable precedent in a field where precedents are much needed. Not only the employees of states raise questions of eligibility, but in a great many instances servants of the federal government seem to labor under the belief that they are entitled to certification as public accountants. Men on the staff of the bureau of internal revenue have contended that their work for the bureau is to all intents and purposes public accounting and that, therefore, they too should be admitted to examination. In one or two cases there has been special enactment to permit this fallacy to prevail, but the great weight of sentiment is against any elasticity, and in most states it has been possible to restrict examination pretty rigidly so as to conform to the letter of the law. One great trouble is that there is so much variety in the laws that the defense against attempted encroachment can not follow the same procedure in every state. However, the opinion by the attorney general of Minnesota and other opinions as well, supported by the pressure of professional will, are generally effective, and it is becoming harder everywhere for men not having legal qualifications to obtain admission to examination. And that is as it should be.

**This Must Be
Unique**

An officer of one of the state boards of accountancy recently received a letter from a man in another state which, for sheer frankness and absolute disregard of the principles of right and wrong, would be hard to equal. The letter reads:

"I am willing to pay \$50 to have a certificate as a public accountant issued to me. Would you be willing to issue such a certificate with the strict understanding that I shall never practise this profession in the state of _____.

"If you decide to do this, which I trust you will, and feel the necessity of having a set of examination papers on file in my handwriting you may forward the necessary papers and I shall prepare them and return to you. This certificate can be forwarded to me C. O. D. for this sum if you will first advise me that you are doing so.

"I trust that you will see your way clear to carry out this suggestion and that it can be accomplished without any undue delay."

This letter would be amusing if it were not that the writer of it apparently did not know that he was doing or offering to do anything wrong. He seems to have thought that all he had to do was to pay \$50 for his certificate, and there seems to have been little doubt in his mind that the state board of accountancy would be glad to accede to his suggestion. Perhaps he was harking back to the days of long ago when it was possible to buy degrees as doctors of various sorts merely for the payment of a small sum of money. What a long distance we have traveled since those days. Most of us had come to the conclusion that the diploma factories were all gone, yet here is a resident in a large city who writes to the state board of another state and calmly suggests commission of an act of the grossest sort of malfeasance. It is discouraging, but perhaps it is too much to expect that there should not be at least one person out of 120,000,000 who did not know.

The Finest Accountants who are apt to consider their own profession the most afflicted may read with dry eye the following sentences taken from a letter addressed by one who purports to be an attorney to members of the bar:

"I offer my services, which are absolutely among the finest in the profession, to you and your clients at exceptionally moderate prices. I am certain that my experience, skill and reputation assures you of excellent work."

There is more in the letter, but what has been quoted is sufficient. Passing over the somewhat unusual construction of the last sentence in the quotation, we may discover one who is perfectly frank. Like most advertisers in a profession this man is evidently confident of his ability, and he is willing to sacrifice any semblance of modesty in order to tell the world. If anything could convince the proponents of professional advertisement of the follies of their ways, surely this should be it.