

**Dr. Alvarez Says—**

# Courageous Words Spoken By College of Surgeons Head

The medical profession has always tried to clean its own house and from now on it plans to do an even better job. It would prefer to clean its house rather than have some group of laymen do it.

At the recent meeting of the College of Surgeons, their president, Dr. Fred W. Rankin, had the courage to

speak out against poor and unethical surgery. He is a past president of the American Medical Association and, during the last war, was chief consultant in surgery to the Army.



Dr. W. C. Alvarez

As he said, some poor surgeons probably feel that they are justified in what they are doing. He blamed his own group for not doing more to try to stop poor surgical practices.

Many physicians will say that in their city no poor surgery is being done, but he thinks it better to "face the facts frankly and honestly." "Let us admit that there are men in our profession—fortunately their number is small—who practice division of fees—who do ghost surgery (perform an operation for another man who gets all the credit)—who perform unnecessary operations, and who charge exorbitant fees for their services. The number, I say, is small, but even one malefactor reflects directly and unfavorably upon us all."

**AS RANKIN WENT ON TO** say, few surgeons are willing to say this sort of thing because immediately they are attacked by some of their confreres. These confreres make it look as if the surgeon who spoke out against abuses was the criminal.

As Rankin said, "Actually our trouble in medicine is that we haven't enough really well-trained specialists who can do

a wonderful job in their field. Too many of them have not had enough training and experience to be what they would like to be."

Dr. Rankin deplored the passing of so many of the old-time general practitioners. "The cornerstone of medical practice should still be this type of physician, who represented at his best, integrity, moral character, selflessness and willingness to serve with or without remuneration, and without consideration of his time or comfort, because he was dedicated to the service of his fellow men."

**BUT, INTERESTINGLY,** Rankin went on to say that while he admires the old type of general practitioner, he is not naive enough to think that we ought to go back to his type of medicine and ask family doctors to do 85 per cent of all the work that has to be done. No man, no matter how brilliant a brain he has, and no matter how fast he can read and study, can ever learn all he needs to know, even in one specialty.