

A bad show by dentists

The Dental Council is expected to hear an unusually high number of complaints against dentists who have contravened professional regulations.

The bulk of the complaints — many of which were made anonymously — concerned advertising, the secretary of the Dental Council of Hong-kong, Mr D. J. Combes, said yesterday.

The first dentist scheduled to appear before the council was trained in the Philippines.

His hearing, which is to begin next week, could end with a suspension order if the charges against him are found to be true.

Mr Combes explained that several of the accused dentists were from the Philippines, but said this did not indicate that discrimination was involved.

He added that 12 other dentists would face disciplinary proceedings during the coming new year, and felt that this number was "unusually high."

Mr Combes said complaints were sometimes made anonymously by both registered and illegal dentists who felt their colleagues were "touting business" in direct breach of the ordinance governing dental practices.

Under the ordinance, a dentist whose practice is on the ground floor of a building is not allowed to display a sign board exceeding four sq ft or containing letters higher than five inches.

The sign of a first floor practice must not exceed six sq ft and its letters should not be more than eight inches high.

Practices on second and upper floors are allowed sign boards with a maximum of eight square feet and letters not exceeding 10 inches in height.

The council has also laid down regulations which stipulate that no more than two sign boards may be exhibited outside a building in which a dentist has his surgery.

In addition, the signboards may not be of an ornate design or illuminated, except at night or when situated in dark places.

Mr Combes said one dentist about to appear before the council had 11 signs showing patients the way to his surgery.

However, he said it was not the number of signs that had led to the charge, but rather that they all exceeded the permitted size.