

The Medical Society of Nova Scotia — Nova Scotia Division of the Canadian Medical Ass'n

The Medical Society of Nova Scotia welcomes the invitation from the Editor to make a contribution to each issue of the Dalhousie Medical Journal.

This Society was founded in 1854 and incorporated in 1861. It will hold its 107th consecutive Annual Meeting in 1960. It has a membership of 570 (December 31st, 1959). Any physician who is licensed to practice in Nova Scotia and who is a member of a Branch Society is entitled to membership and any physician who is a member of this Society can become a member of the Canadian Medical Association. Membership is voluntary. It should be clearly understood that the Provincial Medical Board, which is the licensing body in Nova Scotia, and the Medical Society are entirely separate bodies with different functions.

The Medical Society of Nova Scotia is made up of nine Branch Societies which geographically cover the province of Nova Scotia. Each Branch Society has its own organization, which makes it possible for all physicians in each geographic area to become members and to attend meetings of the Branch Societies, which take place at intervals of one to three months.

Each Branch Society nominates one or more members to be representatives on the Executive Committee of the Medical Society of Nova Scotia. These representatives, together with the officers and the Editor of the Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin, who are elected at each Annual Meeting, constitute the Executive Committee which has the authority to conduct the business of the Society between Annual Meetings. The Executive Committee meets at least four times each year and reports to each Annual Meeting. The Nova Scotia Medical Bulletin is published monthly by the Society.

The responsibilities of Medicine are such that continuous study is necessary. To make this effective, the Society has 16 standing committees; the chairman of each committee has the privilege of naming the members of his committee. The Chairmen may report to any meeting of the Executive Committee and are required to report through the Executive to each Annual Meeting. The Chairman of each Committee represents the Division on the corresponding national committee of the C.M.A.

The Medical Society of Nova Scotia is the Nova Scotia Division of the Canadian Medical Association, being one of the ten Divisions which constitute the parent organization. As one of the Divisions of the C.M.A., it continues to enjoy its own autonomy but participates in the overall Canadian organization, both as an individual organization and as a component part of

Canadian Medicine. This dual function embraces the field of practice and the development of policy: the former takes place through the weekly publication of the Canadian Medical Association Journal and the scientific sessions at the Annual Meetings; the latter through representation from this Division to General Council of the Canadian Medical Association. This policy-making body, sometimes referred to as the Parliament of Canadian Medicine, is made up of representatives from each of the ten Divisions and representation from Societies affiliated with the C.M.A. Between 180-190 members of General Council meet for two days each year prior to the scientific sessions of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Medical Association. The Nova Scotia Division also has a representative on the Executive Committee of the C.M.A.

From this brief outline, it will be appreciated that every physician with a license to practice Medicine is given the opportunity to participate in the affairs of organized Medicine through membership in his Branch Society at the location of his practice, and from it through the Division to the Canadian Medical Association, which, in effect, is the voice of Canadian Medicine. The "business of Medicine" has become of such paramount importance that it must be recognized as an integral part of the responsibility of all physicians and should be the physician's alter ego.

It will be noted that physicians must have license to practice before being eligible for membership. However, the affairs of organized Medicine are of such importance that the student of Medicine must have a general knowledge of what they are and be prepared to assume his responsibilities as a physician at the time of his graduation. There is, in the medical curriculum, some recognition of the importance to the student in so far as there are two periods of two hours each presently devoted to "Organized Medicine", and other related subjects are discussed in the third year seminars. While this is a start towards the objective, it appears to be doubtful whether more time can be found in a busy curriculum for this important facet of medical practice. It is possible that the Dalhousie Medical Students' Society could devote time to develop an understanding of the many problems which are facing Medicine under today's conditions. If such were to be the case, the Medical Society of Nova Scotia would be most pleased to assist in any way possible.

C. J. W. Beckwith, M.D.
Executive Secretary
The Medical Society of N. S.