

the neighboring republic. Towards the close of this period there was a decided increase in the number of these. The first Nova Scotians were: Samuel Head, of Halifax, son of Dr. Michael Head, who came from Ireland to the province shortly after 1756; David B. Lynd, of Truro, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania; Robert Bayard, of Cornwallis, a graduate of Edinburgh, better known in New Brunswick than in his native province; and W. B. Almon, of Halifax, also an M.D. of Edinburgh, and son of Dr. W. J. Almon, who first came to Halifax during the Revolutionary War. All of these were in practice in 1810.

The preamble to the Medical Act and a subsequent amendment point to the presence of a number of unqualified practitioners, especially in districts where medical aid could not be easily obtained. Many of these were men who had gained some knowledge, either through apprenticeship or a partial course at some college. Generally speaking, they were a deserving class, and should not be regarded in the same light as quacks and pretenders.

The early practitioners had to encounter many hardships and difficulties, except in the more populous districts. Many of the roads were mere bridle paths through the forest. Streams had to be forded. Water carriage, when available, was regarded as a boon. In the winter snowshoes were often necessary to complete a journey. Accommodation was very poor; domestic comforts were few; medical periodicals did not exist, and libraries were limited to a few volumes. The serious emergencies of a mixed practice had to be surmounted single-handed. Yet, in spite of all these disadvantages educated men toiled through long years, serving well their generation, and adding their quota to the slow but steady advancement of their profession.

Another point worthy of note is that, owing to the scarcity of educated laymen, and the absence of lawyers outside of Halifax, the doctors also rendered service to the public in the capacity of magistrates, judges of the Inferior Court, of Common Pleas, prothonotaries, sheriffs, judges of probate, and they were frequently elected to the House of Assembly. This added to their labor and perhaps their income, and widened the sphere of their influence. It may be affirmed with justice that no other class gave more useful service to the public than the physicians; nor do the best men of the past suffer by comparison with the leaders of to-day; and they have left us patterns of humanity and energy well worthy of imitation.