

does not embrace the real poor of our country. To the credit of our profession, it can be truthfully said that it is ever willing to attend those in real need, according to their requirements, without fee or hope of reward.

But the members of this Order are chiefly men in good circumstances, some of them wealthy. Where is the charity, nay, where is the common sense in giving professional attendance to these people, "free"? or for the paltry dollar a year they pay?

Do J. A. McGillivray, Q.C., and W. Wedderburn, Q.C., give "free" legal advice to their brethren in the order? What other business man will make such a covenant as the simple medical man who agrees to serve this comparatively wealthy corporation at the nominal sum of a dollar a year for each member? A common cobbler would scorn such a thing.

Yet in every city, town and village in the Province there are medical men willing to take such appointments, and to make such contracts. The motive that lead them to accept such appointments are scarcely a credit to them. They know it is impossible to derive any direct advantage from attendance on such terms; but they hope that, in time, they will obtain the families of members, and in this way increase their own following at the expense of the professional brother who is not the lodge-doctor. This is a most unjust and dishonourable sort of competition in a profession that should be chivalrous. It ruins practice. It teaches the members of these Orders that medical attendance is worth but a dollar a year. They are willing to pay all other bills, but when they are compelled to employ other than a lodge-doctor, they make no effort to pay.

In our Prov. Med. Association this matter has been brought up and discussed. Resolutions, condemning the practice, have been reported by the Committee on Ethics. And the matter has been severely commented upon in letters and editorials in our Medical Journals. Still the evil practice continues.

I am informed that, in Toronto, men who should be held in high professional esteem are not above holding the position of lodge-doctor to some one or more of the innumerable so-called charitable societies. Even here, there are several who hold

such positions. Some who accept them would gladly refuse, if others would. But they do not feel it their duty while Dr. A. and Dr. B. accept, to look idly on and allow these men in an underhand manner to take away their following.

I see no hope of suppressing the practice, unless the Council boldly take the matter in hand. I would suggest that the Medical Act be so amended as to make it illegal for any registered practitioner to accept or hold any appointment as physician to any Lodge or Society, and that authority be given the Registrar to strike off the Register the names of those who persist in holding these positions, as being guilty of unprofessional conduct.

As the matter now stands, those who, on principle, refuse such appointments, are taken an unfair advantage of by the lodge-doctor. By compelling all to refuse, there could be no wrong to any one.

But it will be objected that this action will be harsh to real charitable societies. By no means. If their aims are beneficent and charitable, let them gather funds out of which they can contribute, in some proportion, to the payment of the expenses incurred by the sickness of members and their families. They have as clear a right to offer "free" groceries, "free" fuel, or "free" rent, as they have to offer "free" medical attendance.

I cannot but look upon it as a disgrace to the business sense of our profession, that a Society boasting of half a million in its treasury, should be able to offer "free" medical attendance as an inducement to join the Order.

ANGUS MACKINNON.

Guelph, May 29th, 1893.

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*To the Editor of* ONTARIO MEDICAL JOURNAL.

I thank you for giving me an early opportunity of answering the letter of Dr. Angus MacKinnon, of Guelph, touching the Independent Order of Foresters. As our Order has never posed as a charitable society, the Doctor displays not only want of charity, but more or less of rancour when he speaks of the I. O. F. as a "so-called charitable society."

The I. O. F. is a fraternal benefit society, which aims to secure for its members certain benefits,