

Original Communications.

Address of WILLIAM MARSDEN, A.M., M.D., President of the Canadian Medical Association, delivered at Niagara Falls, 5th August, 1874.

GENTLEMEN:—Were I to consult my own inclination, I would not occupy any portion of the brief space of time allotted to your Annual Meeting by an address, but, as the tyrant custom requires it, I must conform, and will be as concise as possible. I avail myself of the earliest opportunity which presents itself to thank you for the honor you have conferred upon me, in electing me your President, but I regret that language fails me to express the depth of my feelings. It has often been my good fortune, during my long professional career, to have been complimented in a similar manner, but never in the same degree. When I see around me so many distinguished members of this Association who would have filled this chair so much better than myself, and when I look back and remember your—I mean our—happy choice of the able and eloquent chairman who presided over our deliberations during the first three years of the existence of this Association with so much tact, talent and success—the Hon. C. Tupper, M.P., C.B., &c.—I feel all the more my inability to do justice to the office without your kind indulgence, although I will yield the palm to no man for professional zeal—my maxim having ever been, where the public interests of our noble and humane Profession were at stake,—*semper paratus!*

One of the subjects that will engage the attention of this Meeting is the proposed alterations of the By-Laws. The Committee appointed at the 5th Annual Session of the Association, held at Montreal, in September, 1872, to amend the Constitution and By-Laws, reported to the Annual Meeting held at St. John, N. B., on this day twelve months past, and recommended, “that the Plan of Organization of the Canadian Medical Association adopted at the Conference of the Medical Profession held at the city of Quebec, October, 1867, and the Code of Medical Ethics, be continued without amendment;” and further recommended, “that a Constitution and By-Laws be adopted instead of those heretofore in force.” A copy of the labors of that Committee is now before you, entitled, “proposed alterations to By-Laws to be considered at the Annual Meeting at Niagara Falls, Wednesday, 5th August, 1874.

Having carefully examined the proposed alterations. I am of opinion that they will be a great im-

provement on the present By-Laws, with some slight changes and additions.

In Ethics, for example:

It is proposed “to continue the Code of Medical Ethics without amendment,” but no provision has been made in the proposed By-Laws for a permanent Committee on Ethics. Such a committee is in fact a necessity, to which, in my humble opinion, all cases of presumed infraction of the Code should in the first instance be referred for report, before any public action is taken by the Association, or record made. This would prevent the odium which might attach to persons falsely charged; and would avoid the needless wounding of the sensibilities of such as were really innocent of the accusations brought against them.

So strongly was I impressed with this conviction, that I gave notice of motion in 1870, and, on the 14th Sept., 1871, carried a motion unanimously, and it was resolved, “that the Nominating Committee be instructed to name a Permanent Committee on Ethics, to be composed of ten members, representing each province of the Dominion.” The Session, however, adjourned so soon after that no Committee was named at that Meeting. I would therefore respectfully recommend that, as it is proposed to continue the Code of Ethics, a Standing Committee on Ethics should also be added to the proposed By-Laws.

Registration, Medical Statistics, and Public Hygiene, are all subjects which call for action with a view to Legislation.

Committees were named at the first Meeting of this Association, held on the 9th and 10th of October, 1867, at Quebec, to report on the best means of obtaining these desirable objects. The Committee of Registration, of which I had the honor of being Chairman, reported, “that, after mature deliberation, they recommend, that this Association take the necessary steps to have carried through the Dominion Legislature an act similar (in so far as it is adapted to this country) to the Medical Act of Great Britain, passed in 1858.”

The Committee on Medical Statistics and Hygiene, (both of which subjects were referred to the same Committee) reported on Hygiene alone, through Dr. Hingston, the Chairman, stating, “That there was a necessity for a comprehensive system of Sanitary laws,” and promised a report on Vital Statistics at a later period of the Session. A reference to the Minutes of the proceedings of the Association (so far as attainable) shew that nothing whatever has