

quacks who preyed upon the simplicity and credulity of the people under circumstances in which it was difficult, or impossible, to get more reliable assistance.

The earliest Medical Act affecting Canada was one passed in 1788 by the British Parliament. It provided that no one should practise Physic, Surgery, or Midwifery within the Province of Quebec (which then included all Ontario and a great deal more), or in the towns of Quebec and Montreal, without a license. Under this Act, the selling and distributing of medicine by retail, or prescribing for sick persons for gain without a license, was prohibited. The license was obtained by passing an examination conducted by capable persons appointed by the Governor or the Commander-in-Chief of the Province. All licenses granted to practise Physic, Surgery, Midwifery, or Pharmacy were ordered to be registered in the office of the Clerk of the Peace nearest to where the person licensed lived. Fines of £20 for the first breach of this Act, £50 for the second, and £100 and three months' imprisonment for each subsequent offence, indicate how stringent the law was intended to be. Probably the fines were seldom levied and still more rarely collected. University graduates in Medicine, and military or naval surgeons were exempt from its provisions.

Soon after the war of 1812, the first hospital was built in York (now Toronto), of which the present splendidly equipped and excellently managed Toronto General Hospital, and the other hospitals in that city, and indeed throughout the Province, may be regarded as the legitimate successors. In 1815 a Medical Act was passed for Upper Canada (now Ontario) having very similar provisions to those contained in the Act of 1788. At this time the number of medical men in the Province is said to have been about forty. The population was then small. What a contrast this presents to the present state of things with about 2,500 registered medical practitioners in Ontario!

In 1818 a new licensing Medical Act was passed. It authorized the appointment of a Board of Medical Examiners to examine all candidates for license. With a brief interval, this Board continued to exist for many years, and only finally discontinued its work when the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario was called into existence in 1866. For a short time, from April, 1839, till July, 1841, it was in abeyance in consequence of the passing of an Act of the Legislature of Upper Canada incorporating the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Province and conferring upon that body the duty of examining all applicants for license to practise medicine in the Province. This Act was disallowed by the British Government in December, 1840, on the representation of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, that it infringed the chartered rights of that college.

The Medical Board was then immediately re-appointed and resumed its duties in July, 1841. For twenty-five years longer it continued to hold its examinations regularly every three months, and did good service to the Province, its work being well and faithfully performed. Those candidates proved to be the wisest who prepared for their examinations long and carefully, for it was considered from early times to be a very good test of fitness to receive the Governor's license.