DALHOUSIE MEDICAL JOURNAL

Undergraduate Publication

FEBRUARY -- 1941



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DALHOUSIE MEDICAL JOURNAL

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE STUDENT MEDICAL SOCIETY OF DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Published three times yearly—in November, February and April. Advertising forms close on the 5th of the preceding month, All Manuscripts should be in the hands of the Editor on or before the tenth of the month.

Subscription price—\$1.00 per year.

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Editorial

TALIFAX is currently in the midst of epidemics which include measles, scarlet fever, cerebro-spinal fever, and diphtheria. Regarding the first three we have little to say, but diphtheria is a disease which is easily preventable; why should there be an epidemic? If rumour be true, the present permanent population of this city is almost double that of a few years ago; the transient population is of tremendous proportions, and the latter fact is undoubtedly of importance in the production of infectious diseases, especially of cerebro-spinal fever. But there are other factors of equal, or greater importance which must be borne in mind, and because of these it seems appropriate at this time to bring to the attention, especially of the students, the relation between the physician, surgeon, or general practitioner, and the ever-important question of Public Health or Preventive Medicine. It is not our purpose to criticize the civic health authorities, as some see fit to do; without question they are doing a job which is out of all proportion to their personnel; nor do we wish to lay the blame at the feet of the medical men, because without the cooperation of their patients, and the public in general, their task is difficult indeed. We propose to attempt to point out to the medical student where his duty lies, once he is in practice, in the prevention of such epidemics, and in the maintenance of the health of the public. Very few of us will undertake Preventive Medicine as a specialty, but this does not mean that we should lose sight of Public Health altogether. Perhaps the majority will be engaged in general practice, and as such will form the first line of contact