

The Physicians' Enquiry, a questionnaire sent by the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh to ministers in the west Highlands and islands in 1850-2, enquiring into the state of medical practice in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland. A handwritten report followed in 1853.

Completed by Rev Archibald Farquharson, Cornaigbeg

1. How many medical men practise within the Parish of Tiree and Coll?

2 Both resident in Tiree

2. The Names and Addresses of these.

Dr Donald McLean and Dr John Gilchrist

3. Has the number increased or diminished of late years?

Untill within the last five or six years, there had been no medical man for some time. 3 left the Parish, two of whom went abroad, the one 17 years ago, the other 12 years ago. The third left for a more lucrative situation 3 years ago.

4. Have any left the Parish since you became connected with it? If so, for what reasons?

The answer included in Query 3

5. Is there any complaint among the people of inadequacy of Medical aid?

Two well qualified Practitioners might be an adequate supply for the Parish

6. Do you know of any cases of protracted suffering, or injury by Accident, such as might have been alleviated had proper advice been at hand?

Not aware of any for some time back

7. To what extent is the deficiency of qualified Practitioners made up by the efforts of other parties?

Not to any extent worth mentioning, except in cases of Midwifery, there are several women who they often call in preference to the Medical men, partly, no doubt, from their prurity.

8. Does your experience enable you to suggest any measure - of general applicability - such as would be likely to relieve to some extent the evils (if they exist) of deficiency in the supply of Medical aid?

Although two medical men might be quite enough to supply the wants of the entire Parish, which includes the island of Coll; yet most of the poorer classes, although not Paupers (and they form a very large proportion of the population of this Parish), often suffer much for want of medical aid from inability to call one when required, so that were [illegible] provided for medical aid in these cases, I have no doubt it might alleviate the want so much felt by the classes alluded to.

9. What Heritors are resident, either generally or occasionally, in your Parish?

No resident Proprietors either in this Island or in Coll. They are represented by Factors who visit the islands occasionally, but have their residence in the Island of Mull.