THE want of efficient organisation of the Irish medical profession is frequently deplored by many of its members. A well organised profession should be able to command satisfactory conditions of medical service for its members and to safeguard the public interests. Such a medical service would be bound to react very favourably on the quality of the medical services rendered to the people, and thus the public would owe a great deal to a well organised profession.

At the present moment, and at all times, the medical profession in Ireland, owing to many causes, is very indifferently organised and quite unequal to protect and to promote its most vital interests with results which, primarily unsatisfactory to itself, are none the less injurious to the people of the country, inasmuch as the Irish medical services, for their main purposes, are a full half-century behind the times. The causes for this very undesirable state of affairs are generally well known to the too limited number of the profession who have concerned themselves with medical politics. Their recognition, however, is of little value while there is, from any cause, hesitation in stating them publicly and bringing their unfortunate results face to face with those of the profession and the public who are mainly responsible. In dealing with this subject I shall take the risk of being as candid as I can, as I feel if I were to act otherwise, I should fail in my object, as well as waste the time of the Section of State Medicine. In the circumstances much of what I say will possibly, at the time and place, appear irrelevant, but I hope to show its bearing before I am finished.

* The Presidential Address to the Section of State Medicine, Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, January 13, 1922.
It is frequently stated that as much as 50% of the Irish profession have no direct interest in medical politics. This view has but little foundation. All sections of the profession, especially in Ireland, are interdependent, and each should therefore take an interest and do its part towards the well-being of the whole. There are, however, in Ireland and elsewhere, too many members of the medical profession who, (judging from their attitude,) do not admit this proposition and give little or no assistance to any organisation concerned with the promotion of the interests of their profession. There are, indeed, many with a very direct interest in medical politics who, whilst sharing the benefits won by the organisations, refuse to join them, and audaciously state, in opposition to facts, "they are no good."

In the circumstances I must try (1) to show if we are to be saved from the faults inherent in ourselves and from an unworthy individualism, that there is at the moment a very urgent necessity for the organisation of the Irish medical profession; and (2) that the existing medical organisations, even with their shortcomings, deserve better support from the profession than they receive.

It is mainly owing to the lack of effective organisation that the ratio of supply to demand still regulates generally the value of medical services. All the important skilled trades have, through their unions, taken the precaution, by limiting the number of apprentices in the different crafts, that the ratio of supply to demand will not, at least in times of normal employment, be out of due proportion, and thus such trades are safeguarded from the exploitation of more skilled hands than are required. In the medical profession there is no effective means of regulating the ratio that should exist between supply and demand, and the resulting excess of doctors over the requirements of our medical system are detrimental both to the profession and to the public.

One of Ireland's greatest industries is the manufacture of doctors. In support of this statement it is only necessary to mention that fully 80 per cent. of the doctors newly qualified in Ireland are for export. In the past such an excess of Irish doctors, over the openings for them in the Irish medical services and in Irish private practice, was not very serious,