

not the least in Germany and the United States, there are great and financially powerful industries which owe their prosperity to pharmaceuticals.

The path for an international cooperation of pharmaceutical associations is now open. Next year, the Hague international congress will strengthen these international ties, and going on in this direction, we may expect that what is now only a picture of the imagination for many people, will become reality in a comparatively short time.

FAILURE OF PHARMACY LAWS.

S. L. HILTON.

Every state pharmacy law has been enacted for the purpose of properly protecting the public, by placing the sale of drugs and poisons in the hands of those especially trained and qualified, the licensed and educated pharmacist, they, at the same time, restrict rigidly the sale of all narcotic drugs and are consequently generally considered public health measures.

A few of the state laws regulate the wholesale drug business by requiring that wholesale druggists must be licensed or keep in their employ at least one person who is so licensed. District of Columbia, Delaware and Virginia have this requirement.

When the law in the District of Columbia was enacted by Congress, we believed we had obtained one of the best laws regulating the practice of pharmacy, the sale of poisons and narcotics, enacted in this country, we also believed it impossible for anyone to handle or sell drugs, poisons or narcotics, except under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist. The law, however, does except dealers who sell poisons for use in the arts or as insecticides; provided, however, they have obtained a permit from the Board of Pharmacy and that such sale be recorded the same as is required of licensed pharmacists. The law further permits the sale by others than licensed pharmacists of what is commonly known as "patented" or "proprietary" preparations, provided they contain nothing that is classed by the law as narcotics or poisons.

Since the enactment of the law there has been a decided improvement in the conditions in the District of Columbia, the number of deaths by poison and the number of cases coming into the hospitals for treatment for drug addiction has been greatly reduced. Recently, however, it came to the attention of the Board of Pharmacy that sales of narcotics and poisons were being made by dental supply houses without apparently complying with the provisions of the wholesale section of the law, that is, by employing a licensed pharmacist, keeping a record of each sale, etc., as required by law.

Sales of narcotics were being made to dentists on demand; likewise were sales made to their assistants and office attendants and possibly others, without question, so that in other words, they were not respecting or complying with the

provisions of the law and at the same time they were claiming the right to sell drugs, poisons and narcotics, regardless of an Act of Congress, for the reason that the law only applied to sales at retail by pharmacists, showing they absolutely overlooked the provisions contained in the Act.

The Board of Pharmacy took up the matter and endeavored to stop all sales by dental supply houses unless they complied with the provisions of the law, and employed a licensed pharmacist. To this they demurred, taking the ground they were exempt from the Act, and took up the matter with the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the Corporation Counsel, the latter having the enforcement of the law in connection with the Police Department, the result being an executive order was issued by the Commissioners, setting aside the Act of Congress, as pertaining to them, and allowing them to continue the sale of narcotics and poisons. A bill, amending the present law, was prepared and forwarded to Congress by the Commissioners, proposing an amendment to Section 11 of the Act (the narcotic section), granting to dental supply houses the same privileges granted to licensed pharmacists, but without any of the restrictions, and without compelling them to submit any evidence whatever as to their qualifications as is required of licensed pharmacists.

The bill was not referred to the Board of Pharmacy for an expression of any kind. The Board, however, took a firm stand in opposition to the bill, and finally succeeded in having a hearing before a Senate Committee.

This hearing developed a deplorable state of affairs. The attorney representing the dental supply houses admitted that one of them located in the District of Columbia, had sold to a dentist in the state of New Jersey, 200 ounces of Cocaine tablets, certainly more than any dentist would have a legitimate use for in a lifetime, and an elegant argument in favor of interstate regulation of narcotic drugs. He failed to show any good reason why the present law was not sufficient, except that they would be compelled to employ a licensed pharmacist, which they did not wish to do, and that other state laws had no such requirements. Many other admissions were made that surprised the committee.

The Board clearly showed the amendment unnecessary, and as a measure affecting the general public, decidedly dangerous. The present law being ample and sufficiently lenient, should be complied with. The apparent desire of these concerns seems to have been the unrestricted privilege of selling narcotic drugs, creating them a special class, and to enjoy unrestricted privileges not enjoyed by physicians, dentists, veterinarians or licensed pharmacists. The proposed amendment would amend only the narcotic section, and in their apparent desire for this privilege, they had overlooked the poison section, they selling large quantities of poisons, and the amendment, if enacted, would operate to open the way for abuses and to increase the drug evil instead of checking it and would give them no relief whatever with respect to the sale of poisons. Then, too, if such privileges were granted them, general stores, vendors of cork legs and others could demand like privileges, for the purpose of selling narcotics or anesthetics to their physicians. In the judgment of the Board the only amendment needed to the present law was one that would restrict all sales of narcotics to legitimate uses only and close

the channels of interstate commerce except to properly licensed pharmacists, under the strictest supervision.

Previous to the hearing, discovery was made that a surgical supply house was selling narcotics and poisons. A case was made, and after much delay and difficulty, a conviction was obtained in court, under the wholesale section of the law, upholding the contention and thereby strengthening the position of the Board of Pharmacy.

At the present writing, the Senate Committee has not reported on the bill; the dental supply houses are continuing their sales. The fact remains, and one for this Section to consider, as brought out at the hearing, that in other states there is no law prohibiting dental or surgical supply houses from selling all of the narcotics and poisons they desire. Therefore, I believe this question should be taken up and considered by the Section on Education and Legislation, State Boards of Pharmacy and State Pharmaceutical Associations, and an endeavor made to amend the present laws so that narcotics and poisons can only be sold by licensed pharmacists or under their supervision.

I believe it is clearly within the province of this Section to take up and consider this proposition, discuss it fully, and to recommend that all state laws be amended so as to prohibit the sale of drugs, poisons and narcotics, whether at wholesale or retail, except by licensed pharmacists, thereby closing all irregular avenues for supplying habit-forming drugs, except for legitimate use.

The medical, dental and veterinary laws are rigid and well enforced for the reason their respective organizations are giving their constant attention to what may affect their interests. The pharmacist of the past has neglected the opportunities offered along these lines; consequently he has suffered and has been made to stand the burden of many laws that are inadequate and burdensome; therefore, then, the time has arrived when he must look into these questions and use his influence through cooperation and association to obtain better laws and to protect and safeguard his interests.

THE DRUGGIST'S CONSCIENCE.

I believe I am not a pessimist, yet I believe the majority of men are in business to make money without regard to conscience or morality; otherwise the drug business would be conducted far differently than it is by the large majority of proprietors.

What proportion of stores do not sell emmenagogues, narcotics, such as morphine and laudanum, certain classes of rubber goods, baby syrups containing morphine, etc., without an order from a physician? And how many of the stores that do sell them would do so if the proprietor used his conscience?—*H. C. Blair in N. A. R. D. Notes.*