

and feasible things which are offered to us are adopted and pushed forward, there is a bright outlook for American Pharmacy.

COMMENT.

To a question by Mr. Jacobs the speaker referred specifically to some legislation of past years which has impeded the progress of pharmacy and the growth of national associations, and hindered the work of these organizations. He was convinced that the misplaced efforts were usually expressions of enthusiasts who had failed in fully comprehending what the proposals implied—the results were far different from those anticipated, because careful and cautious consideration had not been given to the subjects.

THE COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES OF A LOCAL ASSOCIATION.*

BY J. H. WEBSTER.

In considering the commercial advantages of a local retail druggists' association, we leave out of the proposition the professional and social advantages to be gained through such an organization, either of which influences might warrant the creation of such an association.

Not only must the retail pharmacist meet all the responsibility required of those who compound prescriptions and sell drugs and poisons but he must, as well, adjust his business methods to a basis that will compare favorably with his competition in the lines outside of pharmacy which he has taken on.

In a city where there are a number of druggists many local conditions and problems affecting all arise which can be better handled if the general attitude of the trade can be registered. This fact aside from the professional viewpoint makes it desirable that a trade organization be effected. Hence the local association. The individual realizes that alone he can get nowhere with the larger problems which affect his business, such as State legislature, local ordinances, etc., but with a representative organization results can be obtained. Emergencies can be met promptly and, in certain situations, an association can guide the actions and formulate plans for the trade to follow. By studying local conditions and keeping in touch with the sentiment of the public as well as the membership, its officers should be able to map out a wise course for all to follow. By identifying himself with such an organization, the individual has a voice therein which he can exercise if he so desires.

One of the greatest advantages the local association offers is the opportunity to the individual druggist who will interest himself in the association work. By attending meetings, accepting committee appointments and lending some time and effort for the good of all, the chances are he will gain a wider vision of the business and through contact with his associates acquire a more practical knowledge of his calling, stimulate his ambition and gather new ideas which may be applied to the conduct of his own business.

If the number of druggists in a city is large enough from whom dues may be collected, a paid secretary is usually engaged and an office maintained. The secretary can make his office of great value to the membership in many ways; for example, by bringing warring factions of the trade together, often disastrous price cutting can be averted or modified; an employment service and record of undesirable clerks may be maintained. Enforcement of the pharmacy laws can be assisted through coöperation with the Board of Pharmacy; this is a vital matter

* Section on Commercial Interests, A. Ph. A., Asheville meeting, 1923.

with the average druggist. He naturally resents his neighbor's non-observance of the law, particularly wherein insufficient registered help is not employed. The transgressor, if not checked up, may get by with a lower overhead expense and is in a position to undersell. The local association can make it a part of its business to see that the stores are properly manned through coöperation with the Board of Pharmacy.

If a school of pharmacy is adjacent, attention to educational matters can be given through the organization and the desires of the trade as to the practical training of the student can be made known.

It has been shown that a local association can stimulate business by planning and working out certain sales campaigns—choosing a suitable date, selecting a seasonable item and urging the trade to make window displays all at the same time, thus obtaining the cumulative effort of simultaneous display, which brings marked results. To illustrate, in Detroit, Michigan, we announce the week selected well in advance and take for instance, "Citrate of Magnesia;"* mail to each member three window strips like sample here shown and urge all by a letter and through our monthly journal to make a window display. Last year we had, besides the "Citrate of Magnesia Week," a "Kill the Rat Week;" "Dental Week;" "Baby Week;" and coöperating with the National Association of Retail Druggists, "First Aid Week."

The secretary's office also can coöperate with the various Government officials, such as the local Internal Revenue Collector, Prohibition Director, etc. By establishing friendly contact with these offices often much inconvenience to the trade can be avoided.

Incidentally many money-saving features can be obtained. In Detroit a club rate of \$8.00 on the city directory is offered against the regular price of \$12.00; a discount of 75 per cent. to members for a detective agency service; a 33 per cent. saving on Board of Commerce Collection Bureau and a special discount to members for fire, liability, burglary and automobile insurance is extended.

U. S. P. and N. F. propaganda work among physicians and dentists, and arrangement of joint meetings with the medical and dental professions to discuss matters of mutual interest, are other valuable assets. Our secretary is a Public Notary and a notarial service is extended, free of charge, together with the giving of information and assistance in filing Government applications and reports.

Most of the large cities issue a trade journal supported by advertising, which is very valuable from the standpoint of keeping the trade in touch with the many matters of interest which continually arise, as well as serving as a medium for news of local interest.

Summing up the evidences here submitted there can be little doubt of the advantages a local association can offer from a commercial standpoint.

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

Leon Monell inquired of Mr. Webster relative to the numerical strength of their association. He replied that there were about 380 active members, that the association met quarterly unless special meetings were called, and an executive committee of ten members meets once a month.

Jacob Diner congratulated the speaker and dwelt upon the value of acquaintanceship among pharmacists. The viewpoints of individuals are changed by association. Each local as-

* The strips were displayed at the convention. The wording of three of them follows: "Citrate of Magnesia—The Lemonade Laxative; "A Clean Mouth Is a National Asset—Dental Week, March 26th to 31st;" "Fill the Medicine Chest Now."

sociation can learn something from another association just as one individual can profit by the experiences of another.

Frederick J. Wulling inquired relative to the results of propaganda of detail work among physicians on U. S. P. and N. F. preparations.

Mr. Webster replied that the propaganda work in their association had been part of the secretary's duties. Samples of preparations were left with the physicians. The secretary's work also required that the individual pharmacists be urged to cultivate the physicians of their neighborhood and supply these with samples of preparations and also to make the personal acquaintance of the physicians. It is important that the preparations be perfect in every respect and that the comment made be indicative of an understanding not only of the art and science required in making the preparations but also an intelligent conception of the medicinal use of these. The results have been good. A key preparation "Neutralizing Cordial" was selected and the results checked. Prescriptions came into the drug stores in all sections of Detroit and while the intensive work of the secretary was stopped due to other matters that required his attention, the results of this propaganda continued, evidencing that it could be developed.

Henry B. Smith referred to the work that had been done by the Kings County Association and the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy. It was found that the detail work was quite expensive but in recent years the association is sending out blotters periodically which contain printed information relative to seasonable preparations. He emphasized the necessity of having preparations obtained in different pharmacies to be alike in color and flavor. Otherwise, it develops suspicion that there is a difference in the preparations which should be of similar composition.

Frank H. Freericks spoke of the local organization in Cincinnati. He made reference to the relation of pharmacists twenty or more years ago and their present status. It was his belief that where there are two or more druggists in a locality they should be organized, thereby they will render not only a better service to the public but to pharmacy in general as well. He also referred to the successful organization of county organizations and district organizations in some sections of the country. These were usually represented in the State bodies by delegates and showed the effectiveness of organization and interorganization.

E. Fullerton Cook referred to the expression of faith in organization by the Philadelphia Retail Druggists' Association by owning their own building. This headquarters building does not only house the offices of the association but in it are also display rooms in which trade representatives, wholesale and manufacturing houses have displays of the represented lines. He advocated that an organization should as soon as it is possible own their own building in which the meetings are held and in which the offices are located and opportunities are given for displays of merchandise and pharmaceutical preparations.

W. Bruce Philip spoke of the Alameda County Pharmaceutical Association and the Retail Druggists' Association of San Francisco, an organization which is coöperating with and has contributed largely to better conditions in the drug trade. The organization was started about three years ago and the idea of the work is that which should obtain in successful stores, namely, to give value received. The greater number of the druggists of San Francisco and Alameda County belong to the association and each member receives a weekly letter in which information is given relative to laws and regulations. This information is particularly valuable because the office of the organization coöperates with the local prohibition, narcotic and other federal authorities. About 20,000 letters have been issued so far. Some ten to thirty druggists call in at the office every day, many 'phone calls are received, some long distance calls and an occasional telegram. The replies to these mean service—value received. Papers are filed for the members and when these are required by the Revenue Office they are issued in triplicate. One goes to the Federal Government with the paper and informs the officials what the paper contains, one letter is filed in the office of the association and the other is mailed to the member whose paper is filed. At different times papers have been lost and there being a duplicate in the office, the members were protected. Periodically, information relative to prices is given out. These prices are not based on agreement but are given out as prevailing prices, but the information has its regulating value. The association goes into politics and endeavors to elect men who will give attention to the pharmacist's needs, and the individual being supported by a large body of men cannot help but give consideration to matters which the association deems important. By bringing into an association the larger number of pharmacists in a locality makes it possible to guide and shape business methods in that section.