

## EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, EDITOR

253 Bourse Bldg., PHILADELPHIA

### THE FIGHT TO CURB NARCOTIC ADDICTION AND THE WORLD'S PRODUCTION OF NARCOTICS.

THE relation of the world's production of narcotics to the quantity required for medicinal and scientific uses, which may be more or less approximately ascertained, provides data which have some value in determining the extent of "illegitimate" consumption of narcotics and the number of habitués.

The purpose of the editorial in the February issue of the JOURNAL was to direct attention to the interest pharmacists exhibit in regulations applying to the dispensing of narcotics; the aim of this comment is to impress the need of being more exact in expressing the figures of narcotic production and narcotic addiction—a constant holding up of exaggerated statements gives misinformation which, like all untruths, does injury to the cause. Facts may be disappointing, but they convey knowledge, and are essential for all good work—truth points the way to results. All that is undesirable may not be corrected by a dictum, when the evil influences have been in force for generations, but a knowledge of facts, sympathetic coöperation, and a resolve to discountenance selfish promotions, will assure results. Unquestionably, habitués, as well as those who encourage addiction in any way, need a shock to awaken them to a realization of what the world expects of them—not to shackle, but to subserve.

The term "illegitimate consumption" is not given the same meaning by all individuals or nations. The attitude in this country is that the term "legitimate use," as it applies to narcotics, should be restricted to those for medicinal and scientific purposes. The interpretation may be affected by habit, greed, production, the belief that progressive suppression is possible and that it is "impractical to eradicate over night the ingrained habits of millions of Orientals." Restricted measures may, in a degree, rightly be given a different meaning by a nation at home than in its possessions. Observation changes with the viewpoints—here the habitués are invalids, inmates of asylums or charitable institutions, criminals, etc.; elsewhere, it has been said, these represent a minority, and the greater number, though slaves to the habit, are active in various pursuits, including the cultivation of the poppy. Discussions along these lines have appeared in the public press. Certain countries have situations to contend with that the United States, fortunately, has not. The former should not receive all the blame for the failure of the Opium Conference. It reflects great credit on the United States that narcotic addiction has been curbed to a very great extent in the Philippines—it serves as an example of what may be done in other sections of the world, where, in addition, the economic aspect enters into the problem.

While the dangers of narcotic addiction should never be minimized, there is great need for the press to discriminate between authentic data on the production and use of narcotics. Seldom are the values of narcotics seized given in the newspapers at less than \$10,000, and \$100,000 is not an unusual sum. These figures

are generally computed on the basis of \$1.00 to \$2.00 per grain of morphine sulphate, which may be the price peddlers receive from the unfortunates. The price on morphine sulphate, in legitimate trade, is about \$11.00 per ounce, or approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$ c per grain. Startling figures are put forth by propagandists who, perhaps, desire to come into the limelight, have some other motive, or become so obsessed with their ideas on the matter that their judgment becomes biased. The Federal Government now has accurate data, as far as this country is concerned, and reliable information can be obtained from the Opium Committee of the League of Nations relative to the status of the use of these drugs in the world at large. Bulletins No. 924, by L. Kolb and A. G. DuMez, and 956, by A. G. DuMez, on "The Prevalence and Trend of Drug Addiction in the U. S., and Factors Influencing It," and "Per Capita Medicinal Requirements of Narcotics,"<sup>1</sup> may be had from the Government Printing Office.

A statement frequently has been repeated that the *per capita* consumption of opium in the United States is greater than that of any other country. The *per capita* consumption in these statements is given as 36 grains of opium—the figure given out by the Special Committee of Investigation of the Traffic in Narcotic Drugs appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury March 25, 1918. This figure was arrived at by dividing the average annual importations for the five-year period ending June 30, 1915 by the population of the U. S. for 1910. This covers a period prior to the enactment of the Harrison Law, when narcotics were still constituents of proprietary cough and soothing syrups, diarrhoea mixtures, etc. At present the *per capita* consumption is about 8.7 grains of opium (probably somewhat less), and considerably lower than that of many other countries. To meet this requirement the Narcotic Board of Control of the United States has fixed the amount which can be imported annually at 130,000 pounds. The *per capita* requirements, for all countries, as estimated by the Committee on Hygiene of the League of Nations, are approximately 7 grains of opium and  $\frac{1}{93}$  of a grain of cocaine.

There are two principal forms in which opium is used by addicts—its alkaloids, as in this and other occidental countries; raw or prepared for smoking, as in oriental countries. The sources differ—the former is opium with a large percentage of alkaloids, produced in Europe, the Near and the Middle East; the other, low in alkaloids, is grown in India, China, etc. It may be assumed that the latter is used almost exclusively for smoking, as it is not a profitable source of the alkaloids, under ordinary conditions. The figures for the medicinal needs deducted from the total production of "high grade" opium practically give the amount consumed "illegitimately" in the occidental countries, and from this the number of addicts may, in a way, be arrived at. Without going into the details of the calculation, the number of addicts for the United States on this basis would be less than 50,000, but allowing for leaks, let us say double that number.

The accepted method of estimating the amount of smuggled material, used by the Advisory Committee on Opium of the League of Nations, is to assume that the Customs seizures are equal to 10 per cent. of the amount smuggled into any country—in other words, the total amount of material smuggled into any country is ten times the amount which is seized by Customs officials.

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<sup>1</sup> See JOURNAL A. PH. A., October, 1924, p. 987.

In the fiscal year 1922, there were seized by United States officials 49,381 ounces of smuggled opium, 24,902 ounces of morphine sulphate, 1,451 ounces of heroine hydrochloride, and 19 ounces of codeine—the equivalent of 16,273 pounds of opium. Ten times this amount, or 162,730 pounds, would then represent the probable total of smuggled material on an opium basis. This would have supplied 70,000 addicts, in round numbers, with their daily dose of opiate for a year, and figured not so different from the preceding. The curtailment of the production of opium in the countries which produce only medicinal opium will not eliminate smuggling. It may, on the other hand, make the problem of smuggling a great deal more difficult to deal with by making it profitable to produce opium alkaloids and their derivatives from low grade opium.

Poppy cultivation and opium production, and sale and export of opium, are under strict government control in India. China is the largest producer of opium (low grade), and the central government is not now in position to enforce its demands relative to opium production.

On account of the length of this comment, only this will be said relative to cocaine—if the total world's production of coca leaves for 1922, 3,800,409 pounds, had been used solely to supply addicts, the number would have represented only 67,720 with a 6-grain daily dose of cocaine hydrochloride.

The narcotic supply, opium alkaloids and cocaine for habitués, unless supplied in a legitimate way or from legitimate sources, comes from illegitimate dealers whose supplies are smuggled into the country, and the suppression of smuggling constitutes the greatest problem in dealing with these drugs, here and in all other occidental countries.

There is no desire to minimize the seriousness of drug addiction; the most watchful care and study must constantly be given the subject or the addiction may increase—distributors and users are secretive. Violators should be given a punishment that will discourage them and also others who would engage in the traffic. Having said this, it is encouraging to note that drug addiction in this country is becoming a less important problem each day. The extent of addiction has been on the decrease since the beginning of the enforcement of the Harrison Antinarcotic Act in 1915, is still on the decrease, and will no doubt continue to decrease to a time not many years distant, let us hope, when the remaining addicts will be persons taking opium because of an incurable disease and addicts of the psychopathic, delinquent type, who spend a good part of their lives in prison.

E. G. E.

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#### NOMINATIONS FOR THE HALL OF FAME.

The public nomination of candidates for the Hall of Fame of New York University closed March 15.

The names received will be submitted to the Senate of the University and then to a Committee on Nominations. This committee, designated by the Senate, is made up of twenty-

one electors, and the names selected by it as worthy of a place on the final ballot will be submitted about June 1 to the full College of Electors. This electoral body includes approximately 100 men and women, from all parts of the country, who are well known in scientific, judicial, political, literary, art and diplomatic circles. It requires a vote of three-fifths of the electors to fill a niche in the Hall of Fame.

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE AND CUBAN PHARMACEUTICAL  
ASSOCIATION ACT PROMPTLY ON WRONGFUL USE OF THE  
NAME OF THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL  
ASSOCIATION.

**R**EFERENCE to page 999, November JOURNAL A. PH. A., 1924, will inform the members of the watchfulness of the American Consul, Mr. Frank Bohr, in protecting the good name of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION, and a communication, made part of this comment, discloses the deep interest exhibited by the Cuban pharmacists in this matter. The thanks of the ASSOCIATION are due Mr. Bohr and an expression of good wishes and esteem is conveyed to Secretary Dr. B. Rumbaut and his colleagues. The prompt action and the professional interest evidenced in the letter herewith, of December 30th, was expected, as indicated in the first paragraph of the comment on p. 999. There exists the regard which obtains in professions and this is strengthened by the attachment of our friends in the Spanish-speaking countries. They may be assured that their communication is most welcome.

The decisiveness of the Cuban Board of Health and the American Consul General should also be recorded in these pages, and this probably will close the incident. The letter of Dr. B. Rumbaut, Secretary, as translated for the JOURNAL by the Cuban Consul, at Philadelphia, follows:

PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE JUDICIARY DISTRICT OF CIENFUEGOS.  
(CUBA.)

December 30th, 1924.

"Mr. William B. Day, Secretary,  
American Pharmaceutical Association,  
Chicago, Ill.

"Distinguished colleague:

"This body of associates, in its meeting held on the 21st inst., passed unanimously a resolution to send to you this communication, signifying our protest before that Association against the fact of a pharmacist established in this City unlawfully using the mark ESPECIFICO BRENOT which really is a registered trade mark for a patent medicine quite another from which he actually used.

"We know that this action has been denounced to the concerned sanitary authorities and that every step has been given against the usurper, but nevertheless we want to express through this way to that Association our uncongeniality with such actions *which affront our noble profession.*

"We beg to introduce this expression of our feelings to that Institution in its next meeting, and remain

"Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) DR. B. RUMBAUT, *Secretary.*"

The letter from the American Consul, Mr. Frank Bohr, is appended:

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE.

Cienfuegos, Cuba, January 27, 1925.

"Mr. William B. Day, Secretary,  
American Pharmaceutical Association,  
Chicago, Illinois.

"Sir:

"I have to refer to your letter of October 15, enclosing copy of one addressed to the Director de Sanidad at Habana, regarding the preparation, Especifico Brenot understood to be pre-

pared by the druggist Jose Fernandez Valdez of this city and in view of your statement that you are not in a position to go to expense in order to institute proceedings in this case, I transmitted copies of our correspondence to the American Consul General and the Ambassador at Habana, in case it be considered advisable for the latter to make official representations in this case to the proper authorities of the Government at Habana.

"And in reply I am now in receipt from the Consul General of a copy of a communication dated the 7th instant by the Secretary of Sanidad, indicating that the matters as stated with reference to the manufacture of this product had been confirmed and that the stock of 24 bottles found in the possession of this druggist was confiscated and a fine of \$25 assessed against him; that he claimed to have purchased the product from a certain Oscar Smith whose whereabouts were unknown.

"I have also ascertained that the product mentioned is no longer being offered for sale with labels to indicate that your Association is the manufacturer but now rather with labels which do not indicate the name of the manufacturer but give the name of the druggist, Jose Fernandez Valdez as the general agent for Cuba.

"I am, Sir,

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) FRANK BOHR, *American Consul.*"

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#### "UNITED WE STAND—DIVIDED WE FALL!"

UNDER above caption a message has been prepared and sent to the Headquarters' Campaign Committee by Dr. A. R. L. Dohme. The title expresses a hope, and a timely submonition adds strength to the precept which should appeal to A. PH. A. members and pharmacists generally. Rather than lose the force of the writer's diction by presenting the comment in abstract, the greater part of the contribution is printed herewith. A definition of *morale* is "belief in one another;" it may be applied here because the contributor expresses his belief by word and action. Parts of the message follow:

"The medical profession has gained in strength and influence every year since it became united in the American Medical Association, and despite criticisms leveled at the A. M. A. and its control and management by many people, the medical profession, as a profession, is strong in progress, research, influence and lucrativeness for its members. All of this has been made possible only through organization and coöperation.

"It is unquestionably true that when organizations become huge and lucrative as corporations, as for instance chain-store enterprises, capitalists and bankers enter into the game and very soon exert their influence, and control of a situation is apt to result. This danger is not vital to a strongly organized industry which is very much diversified, as is the drug industry with its three branches of manufacturing, jobbing and retailing. Be that as it may, it is by no means as important or vital as is the absence of organization and coöperation, as at present, for this absence renders the industry vulnerable and keeps it down, and prevents it from progressing. \* \* \*

"Every sick person, in order to get well, depends upon the physician to diagnose his sickness, and upon the druggist to properly dispense drugs of the proper purity and quality to combat the illness successfully. This is a great responsibility, and the public should know it, but unfortunately does not, for the retailer, alone, does not have the time nor the means to inform the public.

“So that the profession of pharmacy may really stand for something and be talked of in the press, in the halls of legislation, and by the people, it is necessary, among other things, that they have a big and representative home, preferably at Washington (where most of the legislation and control that concerns the drug trade is located), and from that home have all publicity, research, and progressive work in the profession emanate. Reporters will go there, the news will be sponsored, legislation will originate and be pushed from there, and meetings will be held there. This home should be impressive and beautiful to attract the attention of all visitors, and be pointed out by guides to tourists, and should be extensive and roomy enough to properly house all the branches of the drug trade, research laboratories, halls for lectures and meetings of associations.

“The best thing that could happen for pharmacy, in all its branches, would be the successful completion of the funds needed to construct the Pharmacy Building and endow it sufficiently to enable it to function properly and, when completed, result in a successful federation of pharmaceutical associations, all united in one purpose—to help pharmacy attain the standing and respect in the public mind that its importance to life and health justifies.

“Large corporations and institutions help the country, collectively—pharmacy helps each individual many times in his life, individually. The doctor is worthy of his hire for he saves the life by diagnosing disease and applying the right remedy, and the pharmacist is worthy of his hire for, unless the remedy is properly dispensed and is of the proper purity and condition the patient may die despite the proper diagnosis and treatment.

“The writer has agreed to equip in that home of Pharmacy a research laboratory as a memorial to his father and uncle, Charles E. Dohme and Louis Dohme, two pioneers in the retail, manufacturing, and college of pharmacy history of this country. Here quite a number of competent, trained, pharmaceutical chemists will be equipped to work out many problems in years to come that may and, probably, will prove of importance and value to pharmacy and humanity. This laboratory cannot be realized and fitted out until the headquarters is built, and this cannot be done until the money is subscribed. Therefore, pharmacists—get busy, one and all should subscribe to this fund, for no money you ever gave to a worthy cause will mean as much to you and your standing as a pharmacist as the money you subscribe to the Pharmacy Headquarters’ Building Fund.”

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#### CHANGE OF MEETING DATE OF THE DES MOINES CONVENTION.

It has become necessary to change the convention days of the 1925 meeting of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION, American Conference of Pharmaceutical Faculties and National Association of Boards of Pharmacy from the week beginning August 31 to the week beginning August 24. It will be more convenient for the Local Committee to arrange for the convention at that time, for the attendance at the State Fair during the time first selected would have made it somewhat more difficult to secure accommodations. While not decided upon by vote of the Council, at this writing, in all probability the meeting will be held during the week of August 24, 1925.