

food rapidly and conveniently, will wince at the taking of a small pill and find difficulty in having it pass down the esophagus. The inventor's desire to administer the pill without the patient's knowledge leads one to believe that he understood he was dealing with a more imaginary than real "difficulty."

The original patent model of the device is on exhibition in the Division of Medicine, U. S. National Museum, where it attracts the attention of those in any way interested in the administering of medicines.

"THE LINE-UP."*

BY JOHN A. J. FUNK.

Independent retail druggists in the larger cities have been contending with chain store competition for a long time. During this period, those in small towns have been looking on with sympathy for their contending brother pharmacists, but with little thought that they would become involved in the conflict. But the spread of chain stores to smaller cities, the improved roads, the automobiles in every family, have made chain stores factors to be considered by every individual pharmacist, wherever located. Yet this condition need alarm no capable pharmacist and business man. Let us assemble the resources and personal equipment of the antagonists, and endeavor to determine who has the most logical chance for success from this line-up.

Location.—The chain stores go to the traffic centers. They know how many people pass a certain location in a day; they know the rush hours; they know the types of people, the class of employments represented. They consider other lines of business at the same location. The independent can surely exercise an equal amount of judgment in selecting his location. He can well afford to spend some time in analyzing the neighborhood before locating, and he should be awake to seize an opportunity, if a better location and building develop near him.

Building and Equipment.—Chain stores have well painted and attractive exteriors; inside, they use standard fixtures, but they specialize in good floors. The independent who fails to have his lease specify that his building shall be kept in repair has lost a point to the chain store.

Stocks.—In proportion to the number of demands and customers they serve, the chains carry smaller stocks than do most independents. They carry carefully standardized stocks, and have the sales-force so well trained that the number of "missed sales" is astonishingly small. The independent druggist who tries to carry, or promises to obtain everything called for, soon has a museum stock and much dead capital.

Display.—The chain store features display; windows are changed weekly, cases are attractively arranged and there are many counter-displays; the independent can match this feature, and where it is done there is reasonable assurance of success.

Salesmanship.—It is generally conceded that the chains have the best sales force. They train their sales-people in groups and individually. They emphasize volume sales, correlated sales and the long-profit items of the store, and no other qualifications of the clerk will do more to hold a job, and deficiency will make the holding of the job uncertain. The independent retailer has an equal oppor-

* Section on Commercial Interests, A. Ph. A., Rapid City meeting, 1929.

tunity to pick his employees, and train them in the points of salesmanship; too often, however, the independent permits sentiment or other consideration to influence him to retain inefficient or indifferent help; among the reasons assigned are: "he is always here on time," and "he does not mind working overtime, if he is asked;" "he keeps the store looking nice;" "he is well liked by my trade;" "his father is an old friend and a good customer;" "he works for low wages"—such qualifications without the ability to sell, give the chain store an advantage.

Prices.—Chain stores advertise cut prices, but they could not continue to stay in business if they only sold nationally advertised articles at a little above cost. Their buying power on many such items does not differ greatly from that of the independent; they pay the salaries of special buyers, maintain warehouses, make deliveries to their branch stores, and take the risk of overstocking and depreciation. They carry stocks of certain drugs, sundries and toilet articles bought cheaply, and priced to give them a large profit; and they sell these long-profit items through sales efforts. The independent has a like opportunity to arrange his selling system to produce profit. The meager profit or loss on goods must be made up by a margin of profit which will make up the deficiency.

Prescriptions.—Few chain stores feature prescriptions, some of them have no prescription stock. In some centers, they have one store which fills the prescriptions from other members of the chain. In the prescription service independents usually surpass the chain; the public in general does not seem to care to have its medicines compounded at cut-rate stores. The independent pharmacist who develops his pharmacy on professional lines gains the confidence of the people, and this confidence will extend to other departments of the store, if properly encouraged.

Managers.—The chain store manager is selected for ability, after he has shown in competition with others that he is capable; he is always alert and full of physical "pep;" he is usually paid a bonus in addition to his salary. He knows that he must produce if he would hold his job; one quality that secured this for him and enables him to hold it—is the ability to make others work—the employees in a chain store are kept busy. The manager of an independent store is the owner; he may not be young and physically fit; he has no immediate fear of losing his job; however, if he has the ambition which prompted him to go into business, then he has many advantages over the manager of the chain. He expects to remain in the community and desires to maintain a good reputation. All he creates in the way of business growth is his own, and this has always been recognized in economics as an outstanding asset to the worker. He is stable, he belongs to organizations, and a church; if he has a family, this is a valuable point of contact. In dealing with the public, he is a personality. The people who trade regularly at a store prefer to know that there is someone at the head whom they can see and consult, if occasion ever arises. No one would expect to find the president or head of a chain in the store.

The line-up of factors in modern drug store management herein discussed presents possibilities for the success and points out weaknesses that may account for lack of success by independent retail pharmacists. It will avail nothing to condemn chain methods or bewail misfortunes, but the independent who will study their methods and boldly apply what is best in them to his own business, and who will add the features required by the special problems of his own location and environment can meet and compete with the chain store systems.