

Editorial

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THE PHARMACOPŒIA AS AN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM.

WE hope in this or in the succeeding issue to present a paper read before the Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing by Mr. Joseph Weinstein under the above title.

When the last U. S. Pharmacopœia was issued, physicians and pharmacists met in nearly all of the larger cities to discuss the changes therein, and with a sincere purpose of arriving at a better understanding of this official guide.

Soon we will have not only a new Pharmacopœia, but also a revised edition of the National Formulary, offering an excellent opportunity for stimulating co-operation between physicians and pharmacists, conducive to better pharmacy, more scientific practice of medicine and greater efficiency in service.

Those who participated in the endeavor to arrive at a better understanding of the Pharmacopœia when the last edition became effective, recognized some defects in the methods pursued at that time, which only infers that they have profited by experience.

It occurs to the writer that the weekly or monthly meetings now quite general among physicians, dentists and pharmacists may easily be adapted for the purpose of studying more closely the Pharmacopœia and National Formulary. The chairman should be assisted by associates from all three professions, each one selected because of his acquaintance with one or the other of the subjects that will be presented in connection with the study. In that way no source of related information will be overlooked.

It would be helpful at the meetings to have abstracts of the final changes in the Pharmacopœia or proof sheets; the same applies to the National Formulary. Such interest will develop the spirit of improvement in the pharmacist and cultivate the physician's acquaintance with these two books, so essential for the scientific practice of medicine and pharmacy.

Another thought brought out in the paper referred to, was further education of those pursuing pharmacy and particularly for those who have not the advantages of a college of pharmacy education.

Objections may be advanced by some, but conservative consideration will reveal that such a plan is simply a concession to modern thought, that education is not for youth alone. It is exemplified in the expanding development of school and university extension. State and Nation have undertaken to provide education, in its limited school sense, without regard to years of the applicant. Even the farmer avails himself of the opportunity, while in every other line of work, wherein knowledge and science may be helpful, instruction is being offered.

New York University in compliance with a request of the Public Health Council has provided two short courses in preventive medicine. Primarily, these are intended for public health officers, but all who are interested in public health

problems may take advantage of the opportunities offered. One course requires six weeks' attendance, the other, one week's stay in the city and the studies may be completed at home. It is realized, that most of those participating take the course for some particular needs, and accordingly the Public Health Council inquires into the experience of those attending, so that the course may be outlined for their special needs and direction given for their studies.

At present there need be no embarrassment for engaging in study at home or elsewhere, simply because of years. The invitation for further study is universal, in fact, it is becoming essential for every individual to be busy with some definite course of study or self-improvement.

The objective of continued study is usually for self-culture, but this is no reason why the education should not be sought for improving the individual's qualification in the trade or calling in which he serves the public. Examples may be cited of persons who take examinations in various lines for refreshing their technical knowledge and testing their advance in the technique of their trade. Physicians avail themselves of post-graduate courses for like reasons. Such methods can hardly be made compulsory, their acceptance must remain an individual response. If annual examinations were required of pharmacists, it might embarrass the boards, and pharmacists might experience discomfort. The value, we desire to point out, is the worth of the resolution "to keep on learning," it is this initiative, which seems to be becoming more general, in professions as well as trades—the provision of educational opportunities, without concern for the pupil's years.

The suggestion of the author of the paper was more particularly directed to schools that in some instances have taken up the work of assisting ambitious druggists, who realize and appreciate that they ought to be better informed regarding progress in the science and art of pharmacy. This need not remain the narrow precinct, local druggists' associations can readily formulate a plan for mutual and general advancement.



PRICE MAINTENANCE.

THE American Pharmaceutical Association is on record in favor of a uniform price maintenance measure and every effort should be made to promote the passage of a law which will accomplish this.

In order to make possible the most effective work in that direction decisions that have heretofore been rendered and the adverse arguments advanced should be carefully analyzed. We are agreed on what is desirable from our viewpoint, but it does not embrace the counter-argument or the views of the opposition, and these are really the points we should study.

The substance of previous statements made in these pages are repeated in saying that cut-prices may destroy the sale of a product, by some declining to handle an article, while others who have made this a leader, in order to attract trade, discontinue selling it after a time and exploit other preparations instead. The dealers in the small towns must reduce their prices to conform to the cut-rate stores of nearby cities, or lose the business of those informed regarding the

lower prices obtainable. There is the further possibility of creating distrust relative to the genuineness of the product. The manufacturer is liable, not only to suffer loss of trade, but have his publicity campaign become valueless. The producer is therefore as deeply concerned in the maintenance of prices as the retailer.

Thus far the courts have, to all intents and purposes, decided that the owner of the goods alone has the right to say at what price they shall be sold. If therefore a complete transfer is made from the manufacturer to the retailer then the right to fix the selling price is also conveyed. In order that the manufacturer may still control the selling price, he must either consign the goods or at least retain a vendor's lien of some kind thereon, and effective until the package passes to the consumer. The terms, under which the goods are shipped to the retailer, would have to be legal; if unsold, the manufacturer would be compelled to take back the goods at the price which the retailer would have paid him, if sold. Very likely the law would demand that each and every package be marked, so that the consumer-purchaser has a knowledge of the terms under which the same came into the possession of the retailer.

This proposition would hardly meet the approval of the small manufacturer, because in order to sell in profitable quantities under such conditions, would necessitate large financial resources. It also further indicates a possibility that strong financial concerns might be perfectly willing to adopt selling methods that contribute advantages to them and are disadvantageous to their less fortunate competitors. The result might finally be that the profit fixed by the former would be inadequate for a small retail business and productive of greater dissatisfaction than are the present methods. It is only reasonable to expect consideration from Congress of the right of the purchaser to patronize the cheapest market as well as his privilege to dispose of his purchases at any price he may desire or be compelled to.

These suggestions and deductions are only presented so that offensive and defensive preparation may be perfected in the interest of a price protective measure before Congress convenes.

The following thoughts are offered: A patentee must protect his rights in the courts, which naturally implies that he has bought some kind of protection from the government. When a manufacturer copyrights a name, he also is protected against unlawful use of the copyrighted name by others. Why, if in the first place the name of an article is copyrighted, could not the government grant additional protection of the sale-price on the same? Under the proviso that if the retailer is not willing to sell at the specified price, he will have the right and privilege of returning the goods to the manufacturer or jobber from whom obtained and receive the fixed wholesale price.

Such protection might be bought for a designated sum paid to the government or, as additional revenue is necessary, price protective stamps might be affixed to the goods. Then the government would be giving something in return for taxation, a benefit which manufacturers would be willing to pay for. The government insures against loss by mail and this is not altogether foreign to the idea suggested.

NEW TAXES.

ONE subject that is quite certain to engage the attention of Congress at its next session is additional taxation. The so-called war taxes of a year ago have not made up the deficiency occasioned by the decreased receipts. Imports are not materially increasing and sugar will soon go on the free list, suggesting further decrease of such revenue from import.

A large Army and Navy necessarily will involve extensive appropriations and these are apt to become permanent. By proper economy, expenditures in other directions might be materially reduced and, comments the *Saturday Evening Post*, "Also no doubt whiskers might be grown on a pumpkin." We have long ago become reconciled to the fact that it is very much easier to establish offices and precedents for expenditures than to retrench. This is not only true with the government but in business and with other organizations.

Where will the additional revenue come from? The question is one that requires the most serious consideration and the solution should be arrived at by establishing a system that will more specifically provide for the future. The present deficit will easily be dealt with, one way or another, even though it may mean unjust taxation for some.

The immediate needs will possibly be derived in part from further stamp tax and some members of Congress still look to the lost opportunity of such taxation on proprietary medicines. Every effort should be made to prevent such attempt, for this means additional taxation of the retail druggist. The tax on telegrams, for example, is not paid by the Company for they charge the price of the stamp in addition to the message; the buying public will not pay for the extra stamp tax on merchandise and it is impractical to make the charge.

There should be an export tax on war material; the income tax should be imposed on a far greater number than under present exemptions. One cent letter postage should by all means be discouraged, in fact, an increased rate might be the easiest method for the production of revenue and every one would be contributor.

Finally however the provisions for revenue should come from a source that will not only produce revenue continuously but at the same time encourage American manufacturers. We do not desire to make a political application, but our tariff system has frequently been prompted by local conditions and the political strength which supported them. When the war is over we will have to adjust ourselves to the conditions which will develop after peace in Europe has been declared. We do not care to foist personal opinion on our readers as to what they will be. Each one has his or her views and so also on the tariff question. This much however we can all be agreed upon, that if the question was studied by unprejudiced minds, by men who are qualified morally, intellectually and by experience, they could formulate a scientific method for making tariffs.

A movement is under way to have Congress provide for a non-political tariff commission. It remains to be seen whether public sentiment can be aroused to sterilize the tariff as a political issue and insist on making provisions for a permanent tariff policy for the United States, worked out by specialists and experts.

We simply submit this important subject for consideration because in our belief, industries allied and closely related to pharmacy may be benefited and so that as citizens our readers may participate, after carefully and thoughtfully studying the possibilities. Business men are beginning to take deeper interest in matters that shape and regulate their activities and whenever the public positively determines that a thing shall be done, Congress and legislatures yield.

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