

To secure efficient restrictions on the sale and distribution of narcotics, and to demonstrate that they are not primarily to blame for the generation and continuation of the addiction referred to, pharmacists individually should not alone be willing to comply with existing requirements under the law but should see to it that others engaged in the same line of business comply fully with the spirit as well as the letter of existing laws and regulations.

There can be no gainsaying the fact that the amounts of opium and of coca consumed annually in this country are out of all proportions to the actual need for medicinal purposes but to locate the existing leaks the followers of all branches of medicine, and particularly the men engaged in the practice of pharmacy, must make consistent and persistent efforts to purge themselves of even the suspicion of being directly or indirectly to blame for existing abuses.

THE STANDARDIZING OF PHARMACY LEGISLATION.*

J. H. BEAL, URBANA, ILL.

Judging from the multitude of restrictive and inquisitorial measures offered in the legislatures each year, the dealer in drugs and medicines should be regarded as a dangerous member of society, who needs to be closely looked after by those members of the community who find their chief enjoyment in regulating the business of other people.

In February of the present year, the writer began receiving abstracts of the bills affecting pharmacy which were pending before the various state legislatures. In April these abstracts made a pile nearly eight inches in height, each sheet representing from one to four or five bills. The original bills from which these abstracts were taken, all of them affecting pharmacy in some respect, if brought together in one place, would probably have made a pile of four or five feet in height, and this was for approximately one-half of the legislative season.

Some of these measures no doubt represented really needed and useful legislation, as they seem to have done in Illinois, but it is safe to say that the majority of them represented the meddlesome attempts of half-baked reformers who possessed only the vaguest of ideas on the subjects they sought to regulate, and their enactment would have been followed by grave inconvenience and damage to legitimate business without corresponding benefit to any one, unless to those for whom the bills sought to provide positions and salaries.

Some of these bills proposed to regulate the drug business in general; others confined themselves to particular features. Many of them related to the same subject, but no two of them were exactly alike in the regulations which they proposed to establish.

Those engaged in almost every other species of commerce and industry could tell the same tale of foolish, unjust and hurtful attempts to regulate the conduct of their affairs by legislative enactment, and the prayer of the whole business

*Read at the meeting of the Illinois Pharmaceutical Association.

world today is to be relieved from constant meddlesome and pernicious interference on the part of the law-makers.

The mental attitude of the modern business man bewildered in a maze of legal restrictions is cleverly expressed in the following jingle:

“There’s law for this and law for that,
 The man in business sighed,
 It keeps me guessing where I’m at
 And how my hands are tied.
 “My great concern today is not
 That I may shortly fail.
 I have to give my every thought
 To keeping out of jail.
 “For profits that may comfort me
 No longer can I plan,
 It’s taking all my time to be
 A law-abiding man,
 “Oh, sorry is the plight I’m in,
 I have no path to choose,
 The court will nab me if I win,
 The sheriff if I lose.”

—Anon.

There was a time when the manager of a business needed only to insure the efficiency of his manufacturing processes and the quality of his products, and to provide the means for bringing his wares to public attention. Today one of the most important agencies of any line of industry or commerce is some agency to prevent its destruction through ignorant and fanatical legislation. There is no class or kind of commercial or industrial enterprise in existence, no matter how honestly or carefully conducted, that would not be utterly destroyed if those who are concerned in it were to accept without protest all of the foolish and meddlesome measures proposed for its regulation. And, be it remembered, all of this mass, or rather “mess,” of regulation is proposed in the name of reform and in the alleged furtherance of the general welfare.

Conservative and Radical Reformers.—Man is a moral animal, in aspiration and theory at least, and it is natural for him to seek constantly the moral improvement of his race and age. With such aspirations every one worthy of the name of citizen must be in sympathy, but there is a wide difference of opinion as to the best methods of bringing them to practical realization.

The conservative reformer views the improvement of society and the amelioration of social evils as a regular and uniform process of growth and education; the radical conceives reform as a violent and explosive destruction of old institutions and the forcible introduction of new ones.

The typical radical is always more or less of a bigot, and when hot on the trail of a real or imaginary evil, his sense of moral values is usually so much disordered that all other human issues sink into insignificance compared to the particular ism to which he is pledged. His convictions are so intense that they degenerate into obsessions, and he is likely to consider any method justifiable that promises to contribute to the success of his cause. Principles of equity and justice that have been recognized for ages are of no account with him, if they

interpose any obstacle to his short-cut methods, or would delay the immediate attainment of the object upon which his heart is set.

His creed is:

THE BIGOT'S CREED.*

"Believe as I believe, no more, no less;
That I am right, and no one else, confess;
Feel as I feel, think as I think;
Eat what I eat, and drink but what I drink;
Look as I look, do always as I do,
And then, and only then, I'll fellowship with you.

"That I am right, and always right, I know,
Because my own convictions tell me so;
And to be right is simply this, to be
Entirely and in all respects like me;
To question, doubt, or hesitate, is sin.
I reverence the Bible if it be
Translated first and then explained by me;
By churchly laws and customs I abide,
If they with my opinions coincide;
All creeds and doctrines I admit divine,
Excepting those which disagree with mine.

"Let sink the drowning if he will not swim
Upon the plank that I throw out to him;
Let starve the hungry if he will not eat
My kind and quality of bread and meat;
Let freeze the naked if he will not be
Clothed in such garments as are made for me.

"'Twere better that the sick should die than live,
Unless they take the medicine I give;
'Twere better sinners perish than refuse
To be conformed to my peculiar views;
'Twere better that the world stand still than move
In any other way than that which I approve."

The Extravagance of the Reformer's Statistics.—One of the characteristics of the radical reformer is the extravagance of the statistics by which he seeks to show the imperative necessity for the immediate enactment of the particular measure which he happens to be advocating. If we accept his figures at their face value, we marvel that civilization has been able to persist under the burden of evil which his computations would establish.

As a rule we may safely scale the enthusiastic reformer's figures by ninety percent, and still have left sufficient to cover all of the evils which have actual existence, with a liberal unused margin around the edges.

This exaggeration by the reformer is due partly to the natural disposition of the enthusiast to accept as true whatever he wants to believe, and partly, in some instances at least, to a deliberate intention to deceive. On one occasion a state official charged with enforcing the food and drug laws asked my opinion con-

* Source unknown.

cerning a report which he was about to submit to the governor and legislature. My answer was that it would be a very good report if it did not contain so much fiction, to which he replied that if he did not "lie like sin" his department would not be considered of any account, and the legislature would not grant sufficient appropriations to pay half his inspectors and office force. In other words, the public has so long been fed upon extravagant statements concerning the evils in foods and drugs, that its jaded emotions will not readily respond to simple statements of the actual facts.

To the well-balanced, conservative citizen the law is merely a formal expression of the well-settled convictions of the majority, put into statute form for the purpose of compelling the obedience of that minority of the community who are not regardful of moral obligations, and to such a reformer the essential work of reform consists in the education of public opinion to the point where his own theories as to the citizen's civil and moral obligations shall become the faith of the many.

The theory of the radical is that statute law is an instrument for compelling other men to believe as he does, and instead of waiting for the slow and tedious process of education, he endeavors by frenzied declamation and the fury of his assault upon the general assembly to impose his will upon the majority.

In theory our newly-enacted laws represent the will of the greater number; in practice they represent the will of the comparatively small number who know best how to work the legislative machinery.

Nine-tenths of the laws enacted in any state the past winter would have failed if they had been submitted to a popular vote, either because a majority of the voters would have been opposed to their provisions or because they would not have cared enough about the measures to vote for them. That these measures were made into laws was not due to corruption or incompetence on the part of the law-makers, but rather to the defects inherent in our system of law-making, and to the fact that every man in public life soon learns that he has more reason to fear an active minority that will go to the polls and vote than a passive majority that will only stay at home and grumble.

The Sham Reformer.—Notwithstanding the bad manners of the honest radical and his constant attempts to reverse the laws of nature, he is much to be preferred to the commercial reformer, or the pestiferous individual who follows the mending of other men's affairs as a gainful pursuit. He is the wily individual who hitches his personal chariot to some phrase or doctrine that stands for a great moral principle, or which represents some grand humanitarian service, secure in the knowledge that with such a motive power he can travel farther on the road to successful popularity and with less critical inspection of his personal baggage than in any other way. He specializes in moral political issues, and is usually popular and prosperous.

The formula for passing an alleged reform bill through the easy-running law-making machine, provided it is one that does not involve a matter of party policy, is comparatively simple. Given a measure with a humanitarian title, a few sensational newspapers to print editorials and play up the propaganda, with half a hundred men in different parts of the state to write letters to members of the legislature, and the trick is done.

The passage of a bill of this character is a commercial proposition, like the building of a house or the buying of a farm, the two great essentials being to properly finance the movement and to select an experienced manager to conduct the campaign. So well is this understood that moral reforming, or the putting through of legislation that can be made to wear a moral label and appeal to the emotions and sympathies has come to be a regular business, like the conducting of carnival shows or of evangelistic revivals. You can hire a troupe of expert reformers just as you can hire a troupe of expert evangelists, with all of the machinery necessary to the conduct of their highly specialized profession, including the services of experienced spell-binders and leader-writers, and of one or more periodicals. The managers can furnish testimonials of former successful campaigns to show their ability, and you can contract with them either on a flat rate basis, or for a percentage of the gate receipts; or in case the reform is conducted under the auspices of a periodical publication, you can pay in subscriptions or by the purchase of advertising space.

It is by virtue of such methods and our loose system of lawmaking that we have laws passed ostensibly in the interest of the public health and welfare, but in reality to foster the business enterprises of those who financed the propaganda that procured their enactment; that in some states we have statutes expressly prohibiting the doing of things which the statutes of other states expressly command to be done; that in one commonwealth a given subject is legislated upon in one way, and in the adjacent commonwealth in an entirely different way, so that the man who does an interstate business must have as many different labels and as many formulas and methods of manufacture as the number of states in which he does business. In fact, under our hap-hazard and helter-skelter system, laws are so easily passed and so promptly forgotten that it occasionally happens that the same measure is placed upon the statute books twice, its first enactment having been overlooked by the enthusiasts who were more intent on passing new laws than upon enforcing the old ones.

A Proposed National Policy Regarding Drug Legislation—From the annual flood of new and unnecessary laws there is hope of at least a partial relief through a general agreement of the drug trade in all of the states to the effect that hereafter all drug legislation of every kind, no matter from what source it comes nor by whom presented, shall be resolutely opposed unless it has first received the consideration of the national pharmaceutical organizations and also of the association of the state where it is proposed for enactment.

The adoption of such a general policy would not mean that the drug trade intended to set itself in opposition to any proper measure for public protection, but it would be the giving of notice that the trade will no longer serve as a punching bag for every fanatic with an itch for publicity, and that hereafter proposed drug legislation shall be held up until its necessity is established upon some better evidence than the unsupported statements of its proponents, and until there has been ample time to analyze its provisions and to estimate their probable effects.

It is to be expected that the hysterical reformer who believes his pet proposition to be of supreme importance to human welfare, will assail any policy that will tend to prevent its immediate adoption. Our answer should be that if his propositions are not good enough to withstand the cool and discriminating dis-

cussion of the pharmaceutical associations, they are not good enough to be placed on the statute books.

The Preparation of Standard Forms of Food and Drug Laws.—A second step towards relief from the constant menace of fantastic legislation is for the drug trade through its national and state organizations to begin the standardizing of the laws relating to pharmacy by uniting in the preparation of a complete series of model forms or patterns covering every phase of legal drug regulation.

It is true that some model drafts have previously been issued, but they have usually represented only a single organization, and at most have covered only a fraction of the field of food and drug legislation. The series of drafts here proposed would be the result of the deliberations of every branch of the drug trade, and would cover every phase of the subject.

It is not likely that all of the associations would arrive at a perfect agreement upon every detail of the drafts, but it is morally certain that the more generally the drafts were discussed the fewer would be the points upon which there would be disagreement, and the final result would be a material step towards the standardizing of pharmacy legislation and towards substantial uniformity in the food and drug laws of all the states, not of course uniformity in all particulars, but uniformity in all matters of importance, with such variations only as were required to meet special conditions.

A practical example of this method of standardizing pharmacy legislation is shown in the method adopted for promulgating the N. A. R. D. model for a state anti-narcotic law to bring state laws into conformity with the Harrison Law. This draft was prepared by a special committee after much serious thought and consideration, but the committee was not so vain as to assume that its efforts were incapable of improvement. It is expected that the measure will be submitted in turn to the various state and national associations for further discussion and amendment, so that when finally completed it may be regarded as representing the very best thought of the entire drug trade upon this subject, and fit to serve as a reliable pattern which can be consulted whenever state legislation upon the subject of narcotic drugs is being planned.

A committee of the American Pharmaceutical Association is now working upon the draft of a general pharmacy law, which no doubt, will be also submitted to all of the other pharmaceutical associations for discussion and the suggestion of amendments.

It is not possible for any one individual, or for any single group of individuals to foresee and provide for all of the contingencies likely to arise from the introduction of new regulations into so complicated a business as the manufacture and distribution of drugs and medicines, and no measure proposing either to change or to add to the existing laws on the subject should be placed on the statute books before two or three years of consideration by the state pharmaceutical association.

Furthermore, this consideration of proposed legislation should not consist of its perfunctory reference to a special committee and an equally perfunctory approval of the committee's report, but of a thorough-going analysis of each section and provision by the whole association until the meaning and ultimate bearing of every clause and phrase have been developed so far as it is humanly possible to

foresee them. It would be a brief and trifling measure indeed that would not be worthy of an afternoon's discussion, and if it is one of any considerable length or complexity it is probable that the entire time of an annual meeting would not be too much for its adequate consideration.

It is no part of this plan to rush these model bills to the legislatures for immediate enactment. The prime object is to provide a series of carefully thought out, well-balanced, and accurately drafted measures to be made use of only when there is a real need of new legislation, or when it is necessary to quickly find a substitute for the crude and sloppy attempt of some crank reformer.

The Proper Education of Public Opinion.—Another essential in the campaign against useless legislation is the better education of the general public as to what constitutes necessary and proper regulation of the sale of drugs and medicines.

Every one owes it to his calling to protect its good reputation as zealously as he would protect his own. Every individual druggist, and every association should enter prompt protest through the press of their community against every extravagant tale of the sensation monger which reflects unjustly upon the drug business.

The American public is a fair-minded jury, but like every other jury it must base its conclusions upon the evidence and arguments which are brought to its attention. If we do not deny or protest against the sensational stories of the druggist's faults and crimes, we have no right to reproach the jury for accepting the alleged facts as true.

Not only is the general public disposed to be fair to the druggist, but it is already beginning to suspect that it has been victimized by the office-seeking patriot with his talk of wholesale adulteration of foods and drugs, and the reckless selling of narcotics and of dangerous and fraudulent medicines, and it is more than ever ready to listen to what the druggist has to say in his own defense.

The gods help those who help themselves.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON DRUG MARKET, PENNSYLVANIA
PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.*
(1914-1915.)

The report of your Committee on Drug Market is given under world conditions which have created effects never before experienced in the drug trade. Dependent as we are upon Europe for many of our crude drugs and fine chemicals, a conflict such as is now raging there has great effect upon the drug trade in this country. Although we have recovered somewhat from the semi-panic and disorganized condition existing during the first few weeks after the outbreak of the war, there is still an inevitable shortage of some drugs, due in part to the severance of the means of communication and transit with those countries which have supplied us with them; the enlistment of men in the various armies and the use of many products in large quantities by the fighting forces of the nations at war.

* Presented to Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, June, 1915.