

REAPING A FULL HARVEST.*

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The long expected, the greatly delayed, the far more perfect collection of standards, which are very vital to those engaged in the drug business, has been completed, and is now official under the title, *The National Formulary, Fourth Edition*. It became official September 1, 1916.

This accomplishment should be a source of great gratification and pride to every member of this Association, as it was compiled and perfected by a few of our members, who, philanthropically, gave of their time and talents in a large measure.

Those persons, who are unfamiliar with the tasks that such an accomplishment entails upon those who assume the responsibility for the production of a trustworthy collection of standards for medicinal agents, cannot imagine and appreciate the worries and cares that beset the members of the Committee on National Formulary of the A. Ph. A.; hence they do not realize the measure of thanks that is due to these noble workers.

Having been favored with opportunities to observe the workings of this committee upon several occasions, I realize what knotty problems confronted them and how earnestly they labored to solve the same, with the result that I feel a far deeper sense of appreciation for what has been accomplished, under the unfavorable conditions with which they were compelled to contend.

Lest you may assume that the N. F. IV was compiled by these pharmaceutical experts without any expense to this Association I will narrate that, to my certain knowledge, the travelling expenses and hotel bills of these members were paid with the funds of the Association; but only for the time they were actually engaged with National Formulary work at an annual meeting of the Association (see Treasurer's report in the 1909, *A. Ph. A. Proceedings*, p. 465; also *J. A. Ph. A.*, October, 1914, p. 1397).

Having produced a complete formulary, it is presented to the Association as a valuable asset—particularly so when coupled with the honored and respected name of the Association, as sponsor for the same, and the printing and distribution of it is in the hands of the Council, when the Association is not in session.

Having become the possessor of such a valuable asset, upon which the Association has expended several thousand dollars, the question, what disposition shall be made of it, naturally arises in the minds of the thoughtful members.

Provision was made, in a measure, at a previous meeting of the Association to meet this dilemma, as we will presently see.

Mr. George M. Beringer, in his address as president of this Association, at the Detroit meeting in 1914, offered a recommendation as follows: "With the appearance of the new edition of the National Formulary, the first prepared as a legal standard, its importance will be greatly increased and the sale should be very extensive, and the Association should reap a substantial profit.

An organized effort should be made to make it a more popular book and to acquaint the physicians as well as the drug trade in general with its character, importance and usefulness.

I would recommend that the Committee on National Formulary be instructed to appoint a specialist or else a sub-committee to prepare an epitome to be used in advertising and popularizing the work, and that subject to the approval of the

* Read before Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. Ph. A., Atlantic City meeting, 1916.

Committee on Publication and the Council, an edition sufficient for these purposes be published.

Also that either an independent committee or a sub-committee on National Formulary be appointed as a Committee on Propaganda, whose duty it shall be to acquaint the physicians with the character of the N. F. preparations, to prepare literature for distribution through our members and the drug trade in general, explaining the formulas, uses and dosage of a selected list of the more desirable preparations. Such a system of advertising the book should add very materially to its usefulness and, considered solely from an advertising standpoint, the Association should be amply reimbursed for their expenditures.

The Association passed a favorable verdict upon this suggestion, in the following manner: The Committee on President's Address reported in these words: "The Committee approves of the publication of an Epitome of the N. F. with the objects stated in the address, and that there be established a Committee on Propaganda with the object of increasing the use and extending the influence of the N. F. preparations."; and the Association, upon the motion of Mr. M. I. Wilbert, that the above recommendation be referred to Council with power to act on favorable recommendation from the general session, endorsed such a course of action.

The Association should take definite action on this proposition at this time, and if favorably acted upon, the proper official should attend to its application without delay.

As the owners of this book of legal standards, and holding an honored and respected position in the eyes of the medical profession, this Association is the logical one to expound its merits to the medical practitioners, who will accept without reserve the literature offered to them by the American Pharmaceutical Association.

With the income that will be derived from the sale of the N. F. IV it should be possible to take up this work without delay, thereby demonstrating to the rank and file of druggists that the A. Ph. A. is mindful of their material interests in consequence of which the efforts of our Membership Committee should be rendered much easier and far more satisfactory results be obtained.

Inasmuch as the N. F. is recognized by the Federal authorities as a book of legal standards for medicines purchased or prescribed under the titles by which they are therein designated, and as it is necessary that provision must be made at once to collect data and correct any errors that may have crept into this revision, also get in readiness for the next revision of the N. F., which will entail considerable expense upon the Association, it is imperative that the Association shall derive the greatest possible income from the present revision.

This may not sound professional or altruistic but it appears to me to be good logic; and as the ultimate object is to benefit mankind by the wise expenditure of this income in an endeavor to improve our remedial agents and secure greater accuracy of standards, no serious objections can be raised to such a course of action. Is it really unprofessional? Upon careful analysis, is it not altruistic?

It does not sound very professional to make appeals in the churches for large collections, with which to meet urgently pressing bills, but the custom is frequently followed I am certain, the ultimate benefits derived therefrom justify the action.

As this Association has not been liberally endowed by a Carnegie or a Rockefeller, it is justified in reaping as great a harvest as possible from the sale of its assets, so long as it does not overcharge for its ware, taking into consideration the business risks it must run in the venture.

Up to this period in the history of the N. F. this Association appears to me to be like unto a farmer who received a grant of land, that appeared to have good productive possibilities, from which he could derive a nice income. He tilled the soil carefully, received assistance from his children in caring for the growing crops and everything looked very bright for his family's comfort when, alas! he carelessly gathered a portion of his crops, and then sat idly by and allowed his neighbors to gather whatsoever they wished of the remaining portion of the crops, he taking chances on deriving some benefits from the increased valuation of his land, due to the demonstration of the possibilities of the land.

The time for such action has passed, and in this day of strenuous competition (and this Association has its competitors) it is the wisest and safest policy to reap a full harvest.

DISCUSSION.

GEO. M. BERINGER: It seems to me that one of the real duties of this organization is to make an effective propaganda in behalf of the National Formulary, which is the property of the Association. There is no one better acquainted with its contents and the purpose that it is to serve than myself; and I think that we should certainly have taken the opportunity to have prepared an epitome of the book two years ago. That was the purpose of the recommendation I made at that time. It seemed to me that an epitome, to be prepared and distributed coincidentally with the publication of the work, would have been a good thing for this Association to have undertaken. This task should not be left to the men of some other organizations, whose membership may be indifferent.

H. P. HYNSON: Do you think that this could best be done by the Committee on National Formulary?

GEO. M. BERINGER: I think that a sub-committee of that Committee could readily prepare such an epitome and thus demonstrate its value to every pharmacist and physician.

F. W. MEISSNER, JR.: The American Medical Association has asked the Board of Trustees of the U. S. P. for the privilege of preparing an epitome of the new Pharmacopœia. I do not know whether they asked a like privilege of the Council of this Association or not. If so, would it be advisable for this Association to publish an epitome of the National Formulary for general distribution? Would there be a probability of competition, and of unnecessary expenditure on the part of this Association in publishing an epitome of the National Formulary alone?

GEO. M. BERINGER: It seems to me that it would be best for this Association to do its own propaganda work. The viewpoint of the medical man is very desirable, but the thought was that the official epitome prepared by the American Pharmaceutical Association should be used for work in the local and state associations, with such explanations as we alone could give. Possibly it might also be placed in the hands of physicians.

F. M. APPLE: Another reason that actuated me in taking up this recommendation was the fact that propaganda work has been done by a commercial organization, on our own property. This organization got into a serious controversy with the American Medical Association, and I felt that this fact weakened materially the propaganda work on the National Formulary. This is our own property, and we have expended a great deal of money on it. I feel that the time has come to act, if we do not wish this volume to be treated in the same way. We want to have it arranged so that when we go to the members of the American Medical Association, they will have no reason to refuse to accept it. I want to keep the propaganda for the National Formulary and United States Pharmacopœia free from any commercial taint.

M. I. WILBERT: I want to call attention to the possibility of doing just exactly the opposite of what Mr. Apple suggested, of having an absolutely clean and acceptable propaganda. I am at sea as to how a purely pharmaceutical epitome of the National Formulary would appeal to the medical practitioner, and if we go beyond that, we are going beyond our province, and will cast some doubt on the object of our propaganda from the physician's point of view.