

HOSPITAL CORPS OF UNITED STATES ARMY.*

For more than sixty years the American Pharmaceutical Association worked for advancement in pharmacy and its allied branches; its inception and all of its endeavors during this time have been not only for such advancement but the betterment of its members and pharmacists generally. This has been accomplished by the promotion of better and higher educational requirements, more efficient and higher standards for drugs, preventing sophistication and adulteration, and at the same time conserving and protecting the public health.

For years one of the endeavors of this organization has been the improvement of the condition of the pharmacists in the Government service. Before the Association entered this field of endeavor the conditions were such that men of pharmaceutical education and training were loath to enter the service as pharmacists. Pharmacists in the Navy and the Public Health Service have received recognition from Congress and their conditions are much improved, largely through the efforts of the American Pharmaceutical Association, but the Hospital Corps, U. S. Army, has not fared so well; the conditions to-day are practically the same as they have been for years. The American Pharmaceutical Association has for about ten years been working and endeavoring to show the Department and Congress that it was necessary to improve the conditions of the Hospital Corps if they desired to obtain efficient men to enter the service and retain the men who composed the Corps. Many of the latter had become expert in bacteriology and the preparation of serums and vaccines, for the reason that the law governing this branch of the service offered absolutely no inducement whatever for men of pharmaceutical training to enter the service, and those who had acquired knowledge and become expert in certain lines could obtain better remuneration from private business concerns.

The Surgeon-General has reported many times his inability to obtain the men he desired and that it was impossible to secure a full complement of men for the Corps.

The present program of preparedness of President Wilson, providing for the reorganization of the Army, seemed to be the proper time to do something for the members of the Hospital Corps. The endeavors of the Surgeon-General and that of the American Pharmaceutical Association have helped to persuade the Committee on Military Affairs of both Houses of Congress to report a bill which contains provisions for the betterment of the Corps and its members, and there seems to be no doubt that this bill will shortly become a law.

By the terms of this bill the Hospital Corps becomes the enlisted force of the Medical Department, two new grades are provided: Master Hospital Sergeant, at \$75 per month, and Hospital Sergeants, at \$65 per month and allowances. Below these come the six former grades ranking in pay from \$15 to \$50 per month for Sergeants first class. Master Hospital Sergeants are to be appointed by the Secretary of War, but only after an examination before a board of medical officers, which examination shall include pharmacy and the applicant must have served at least twelve months satisfactorily as hospital sergeant or sergeant first class. It also provides that original enlistments hereafter for the Medical Department shall be made in the grade of private, and the Secretary of War may make such regulations as are deemed necessary. It is further provided that the total number

* By S. L. Hilton, Chairman of the Committee on the Status of Pharmacists in the Government Service.

of enlisted men in the Medical Department shall be approximately equal to, but not to exceed, five percentum of the total enlisted strength of the army authorized by law, except in time of war, when the Secretary of War may increase the number as the service may require. It is further provided that the number in each of the several grades shall not exceed the following percentages of the total authorized enlisted strength of the Medical Department: Master Hospital Sergeants, ½ percent; Hospital Sergeants, ½ percent; Sergeants, first class, 7 percent; Sergeants, 11 percent; Corporals, 5 percent; Privates, first class, and Privates, the remainder of the number authorized by law.

The following is a comparative statement showing how the proposed bill will increase the strength and improve the condition of this branch of the service.

Based on the present strength of the army, total 4436.	Proposed increase as provided by the bill, 6328.
Master Hospital Sergeants	22
Hospital Sergeants	32
Sergeants, First Class	300
Sergeants	488
Corporals	222
	32
	32
	442
	696
	316

Ratings: Surgical Assistants, \$5; Dispensary Assistants, \$2; Nurse, \$3.

The bill has passed the House of Representatives and will shortly be considered by the Senate, the time is now propitious for our Association to assist in this good work and use every endeavor to have the provisions of this bill enacted into law, *a letter to your Senator will be of help.*

While the titles provided by the bill are not what we have desired, the provisions are in accord with what we have been asking and working for. Our Association would have preferred that the ranking men be given a commission as pharmacists; the opposition, however, was so strong that to continue any endeavor with this object in view would have no doubt resulted in defeat not only in this provision, but in the other increases we were asking. We therefore concluded to accept and work for the proposition as provided by the bill and thereby help the members of this branch of the service, many of whom are members of our organization.

In a way the pharmacists of the army are receiving some slight recognition and the provisions of the bill show that Congress and the Department are recognizing the value of the pharmacists in the Army. Let us further continue our efforts so that in the near future the pharmacists in the Army will be commissioned.

“ If we were to sail along under fair winds, each lying at his ease, life would teach us nothing but lazy selfishness. The contrary wind gives us the fellowship of the oars—the need of keeping time with one another, of each helping the others while he pulls away on his own thwart. No finer sound rises to heaven than the comrade song of the rowers. Surely we all know that the best things life has brought us—the things that bring the deepest satisfaction—have been the chances of service.”—*Selected.*