

# EDITORIAL

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## PHARMACISTS SHOULD HOLD POSITIONS IN SEVERAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

**P**HARMACISTS throughout the country, assisted to some extent by medical men, are making a strong effort to have pharmacy recognized by the Government in the creation of a pharmaceutical corps in the U. S. Army. By granting such recognition the United States will not be establishing a precedent nor take the lead among nations in such establishment, for France many years ago provided a pharmaceutical corps as a branch of its military organization and, since the world conflict, has added greatly to its duties and numerical strength, emphasizing the words of the senator from Rhone when he said "that the members of the French Pharmaceutical Corps have in their humble sphere contributed most eminent service to save the country." If then France has found that the services of pharmacists are essential to the men of their armies, the experience should be accepted as of value to our soldiers.

There is no reason why medical men in the Army should be deprived of qualified pharmaceutical service when this is deemed essential in civil practice, nor is there reason why efficient pharmaceutical service, which is provided to the men in civil life, under legal regulations, should be withdrawn from them when they enter upon duties which will most certainly call for medical and surgical attention. If the measures now before Congress are defective in any way or seriously conflict with the present military organization, then the subject should be investigated and the inclusion of a pharmaceutical corps made possible. The time for action is now. What French pharmacists have done can be done by American pharmacists, for the high position of American pharmacy has been and is recognized in Europe. The *Pharmaceutical Journal* (England) of February 9, 1918, says in an editorial:

"The United States has been uncommonly fortunate in the possession of a remarkable array of eminent pharmacists who have rendered signal service to the science of pharmacy and to the cause of pharmaceutical education and progress."

But this is incidental at this time for this writing, as there is no desire to interpose a new subject while the more important one for the present is still in the shaping. However, if the Government once gives recognition to pharmacy and realizes the possibilities of its service, then the further necessity will be recognized, that there are departments in which the services of pharmacists will be helpful not only to the Government but to industries which contribute to the country's prosperity and which the Government desires to cooperate with. Recently, in preparing the war tax measure, and more specifically that portion which concerns the tax on alcohol, it became very evident that the framers of these regulations

were unacquainted with retail and manufacturing pharmacy, and resulted in unintentional exactions that could have been avoided if a pharmacist was attached to the Revenue Department. It also stands to reason that in the Bureau of Chemistry more trained pharmacists should be employed. It need not be emphasized that the Government not only desires to be fair and shape the regulations in such a way that they will protect the public but is also equally desirous of having them practicable and adaptable to the industries concerned. The sincerity of pharmacists is clearly evidenced in the preparation of standards in the United States Pharmacopoeia and National Formulary; but aside from substances coming within the scope of these standards there are products which differ and still there is commercial need for them. Herein trained pharmacists can be of great service, and therefore the resolutions offered recently by Dr. J. H. Beal and printed on p. 217 of the February JOURNAL, will bear reproduction. The matter is deserving of attention, not only by pharmaceutical organizations, but by the Government as well; for President Wilson has repeatedly referred to the importance of Government coöperation with the industries and reversely. The resolution follows:

"WHEREAS, It does not appear that at the present time there are experienced and practically trained representatives of the drug manufacturing and selling industries connected with the U. S. Bureau of Chemistry or with the U. S. Bureau of Internal Revenue, both of which bureaus are charged with the interpretation and administration of laws applying to the manufacturing and selling of drugs and medicinal products; and

"WHEREAS, The just and equitable interpretation and application of such laws frequently involves the consideration of technical questions which can be properly answered only by those who have had technical training and practical experience in the manufacturing and selling of drugs and medicinal products; therefore be it

"Resolved, That we recommend that the various associations and societies representing the several divisions of the drug trade bring the above statements of facts to the attention of the proper authorities at Washington and urge upon them the appointment in the Bureau of Chemistry and in the Bureau of Internal Revenue of one or more representatives familiar by practical experience with the manufacturing and handling of drugs and medicinal products and of the material used therein."

Another instance that might be cited showing that the departments of the Government need the advice of pharmacists is indicated in *Document 564* of the War Department, from the office of the Quartermaster General. The *Manual* contains definitions, which, on the whole, are sufficiently clear and comprehensive, but such statements as the following also occur and could readily have been correctly given if there had been consultation and coöperation.

"Aniline. Dye used in highly colored confectionery. A product of petroleum. The red shades are harmless, but the chemicals used in making blue, green and other colors are injurious."

*"Ferment.* A substance capable of producing yeast fermentation."

*"Glucose.* A cheap sugar that will not easily crystallize or a cheap syrup that will not crystallize, very much like 'Silver Drip,' but much thicker. Glucose is often made by treating cornmeal with sulphuric acid. It is very wholesome."

E. G. E.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILITARY RANK.

**T**HE following epigram is on the letter head of the New York State Department of Health: "Public health is purchasable. Within natural limitations every community can determine its own death rate." The statement is both true and of great significance and speaks much for the progress of medicine, and pharmacists are glad to accord to the practitioners of medicine and surgery every credit that is justly due them, in fact the achievements of medicine and of surgery have perhaps not generally received due consideration. Every now and then some one attempts to express the value of "preventive" medicine in dollars. The present war is again testifying to the wonderful progress medicine and surgery have made, to the real heroism and genuine patriotism of surgeons and physicians. There are no dangers they do not risk, without concern for their own health and comfort. The conferring of military rank to medical men in the Army and Navy service is a just and rightful recognition, and places them in position to do the most efficient work. Not that they could not and would not do equally as good work without such rank, but the opportunities are enhanced by this recognition, the very distinction given them commands the respect and obedience of those whom they serve. In large, and especially military, organizations, rank is essential to efficiency; it establishes a relationship that would not exist without the distinction, and stimulates a desire to advance.

In giving all due credit to the medical men for their achievements, for making valuable suggestions, for their sacrifices in behalf of science and humanity, the fact cannot be ignored that pharmacists have had a part in these accomplishments. It is true, perhaps, that medical men have devised some of the means used in their practice, but, as a rule, they were too busily engaged in their special field of activity to give attention to the preparation of agents they realized the need of. Lister was always ready to give Pasteur credit for his investigations, and Sertürner, Labarraque, Pelletier, Caventou, Gaedeke and the host of others who studied and developed the active constituents of drugs are certainly entitled to recognition as contributors to medical advance, and when modern serum therapy and physiological standardization are considered, American pharmacists, many of them humble retail pharmacists, have contributed their share in investigations and accomplishments. The spirit of the modern world looks toward the application of every scrap of knowledge that can be collected and coordinated, in every

field where opportunity for its application can by any possibility be found. It is not to be expected that military surgeons and physicians should accord pharmacists the consideration they would if a degree of rank was given them. Assign to the most noted scientist the duty of scrubbing floors and other menial labor, and it is only in case of utmost emergency that his views or assistance will be asked in the matter of scientific subjects with which he is thoroughly informed.

England recently has given rank to some pharmacists engaged in France, and a report of a *medical officer* who also refers to the colonial and foreign pharmaceutical corps, in brief, demonstrates the value of commissions to pharmacists. He states:

"The first point that struck me as noteworthy was the complete confidence reposed by the commanding officer and medical officers in the pharmacist and his work; secondly, the frequent consultations as to the preparations to be utilized in the treatment of cases; thirdly, the general elevation of the importance of the pharmaceutical branch of the service; fourthly, the insistence of colonial officers on the imperative necessity for nothing but fully qualified pharmacists being responsible for the dispensaries; and, fifthly, the consternation with which they regard the antiquated pharmaceutical arrangements of the British medical service as compared with the modern and efficient organization of the colonial and foreign arms of this corps. With reference to the first point, it is a fact that in 99 percent of cases an officer has more of the confidence of his commissioned officers and fellow officers than a non-commissioned officer, and in the case of prescribing, as in the second instance, it follows that ultimately more benefit will accrue to the patient. The idea is frequently harbored that because the dispenser is not commissioned his statements are not fully reliable. This is obviously a fallacy; but, at the same time, it must be admitted that commissioned rank increases the standing of a person. Again, with reference to the second point, it is fairly evident that medical officers consider it somewhat beneath their dignity to ask for information on a subject in which they are supposed to be proficient, especially as the information would be given by a non-commissioned officer. The sum and substance of the whole is that where treatment is specialized (*i. e.*, from the casualty clearing station down), the presence of a pharmacist who could be consulted with confidence, would be of a distinct advantage to the patient; and that to insure confidence and coöperation, the granting of commissions to experienced pharmacists is essential."

These very clear and modest statements certainly should appeal to those medical men who are fearful that pharmacists will be given a rank and thereby injure their standing in some unaccountable way. It would be desirable for them to know that those who serve them are qualified to do so intelligently and not to be in doubt as to whether the dispenser has had training or simply has been assigned to dispensing duty because he can read the number on a container, and has no knowledge of drugs whatever. Such a condition is impossible in civil life, why should it obtain in the Army? It stands to reason that there are qualified pharmacists, many are enlisted as privates; it is as reprehensible to waste talent as material things. There is something wrong somewhere; let the situation be cleared up. Within limitations, the U. S. Army can determine its own death rate and pharmaceutical service will have a part. Pharmacy can be ignored, but not without sacrifice of men.

E. G. E.

## THE NEED FOR A FEDERATION OF ALL PHARMACEUTICAL ORGANIZATIONS.\*

**N**EVER in the history of American pharmacy has there been greater urgency for a federation of pharmaceutical organizations than at present. Leaders in pharmacy have recognized the need ever since the inception of the American Pharmaceutical Association, but evidently the movement has never been sufficiently energized to bring about the culmination.

The military organization presents in a way distinct and separate branches, but all of them are coördinated so as to utilize the various activities represented for a common purpose. To permit these corps to act independently throughout would thwart their efforts. And so the multiplication of organizations of an industry, unless joined in common purposes, does not permit of the grand efforts, those in which all should be concerned. Let it be admitted that all the national pharmaceutical associations serve those branches which they directly represent, that each of them is essential for carrying out special aims and that these have no interest for the other divisions of the drug industries; it still remains that these sections are related, all are finally dependent upon the distributors; the reverse, of course, applies as well. For example, there has been much said about doing away with the middlemen, but their place has been so firmly fixed that up to the present they are as important a branch as ever and will so continue because their services are necessary. The point then is to unite these links into a strong chain for the purposes in which the aid of all is essential. If this can be properly worked out it will develop that there are many problems, in common, which can be solved and movements that can be carried into more effective execution. Wise executive measures may also reduce the large overhead expense which encumbers most of these organizations. It stands to reason that, if the coöperation of many and their numerical strength can bring about a better recognition of pharmacy, then every division will benefit.

To prevent the coalition of forces, persuading them to remain inactive or work at cross-points, gives strength to the adversary. The reverse then is true that, if there can be unison of action, if the separate branches can be counted on for their support and numerical strength in important projects, there is greater possibility for achieving in them. It would seem to be equally true that if all these separate bodies can be brought into a federation each will benefit in many ways. It is of paramount importance that the local and state associations become attached, for the common interest of an association should represent the interest of the in-

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\* See address of Ex-President Frederick J. Wulling, September JOURNAL, 1917, p. 778, October number, p. 854, and message of Acting President A. R. L. Dohme, p. 117, February issue, 1918.

dividual member. Each one of the societies referred to seeks to impress the individual that his efforts are enhanced by association work, and if the argument will hold then certainly it is equally applicable, and in a larger degree, that the federation of closely related associations must be productive of increased relative benefits. Such organization will offer greater opportunities for coöperation of the allied interests, for shaping and regulating the drug business in general on a more satisfactory and profitable basis, for making possible more rational legislation, and coördinating the system of teaching with the present-day needs and at the same time developing what is so essential for the progress of pharmacy, namely, research. We need a materia medica that will be broad enough to meet the views of all practitioners of medicine, and that will draw more extensively from our own resources and products of our industries.

Pharmacy is entitled to representation in the departments of the Government, deserves recognition in the military service, but without concerted action and with indifferent support of the medical profession and the laity, the paths that lead to success are not smooth.

The minds of many should be occupied with this question of federating the body-pharmaceutic, and that there must be a way of impressing the importance of pharmacy, that divisionalism has not done so, and that federation may be the solution of the vexing problem. In this proposition the situation of the drug business should be faced, and not the impossible attempted; it is a problem of coördination and coöperation; we must realize that the development of the drug industries has been influenced by economic conditions, and these cannot be changed at will, but there is a possibility of having the branches unite in common purposes and systematize these endeavors for the good of all associated organizations.

“To know that which before us lies in daily life is the prime of wisdom.”

A committee has recently been appointed to study the possibility and practicability of a federation and outline a plan of procedure and the members of it are now seriously engaged with their assigned duties. This writing is therefore in the interest of the problem to the extent of encouraging all members of the Association to study the subject. The greatest fault of associations is to give approval to many recommendations, resolve and thereafter forget. The proceedings of our Association record many wise suggestions that were enthusiastically received by the members but were never utilized by them. Resolutions should have a deeper significance.

E. G. E.