

EDITORIAL

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THE EFFECT OF PROHIBITION LEGISLATION ON PHARMACY AND THE INDUSTRIES.

IT is unfortunate that it is possible to use a product of such great utility as alcohol as an intoxicant. However desirous the legislators and the Revenue Department may be to provide regulations which will properly control the sale, without interfering with the legitimate use in medicine and the industries, their task is not an easy one.

In regulating the sale of narcotics only their use in medicine needs consideration; beyond this the sales are largely illegal. It is quite different with regulations applying to alcohol; there is a need for it in the preparation of medicine; no other solvent and preservative has been found which will take its place; when commercially considered its value in the arts and industries, and usefulness as fuel, for motor power, illumination, etc., is even greater. The development of the dye and medicinal chemical industries in Germany was largely on account of cheap alcohol and the aid given to industries using alcohol in manufacturing. Our Government is, therefore, confronted not only with the necessity of regulating the sale of alcohol, its use in pharmaceutical and chemical manufacturing, but with the phase of great commercial importance, the possibilities of which under encouragement can hardly be predetermined. As was stated at the hearing in Congress, "Alcohol occupies a tremendously important position in the industries of the country, as important industrially as pig iron would not be an extravagant statement." In the manufacture of pharmaceuticals and medicinal chemicals it is absolutely essential, and the regulations should not seriously hamper their manufacture, increase the cost of medicines, or seriously interfere with the dispensing of it or with legitimate sales. Legislation which will meet all immediate requirements seems almost impossible, so that the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Revenue Department, should be given authority to issue regulations that will meet exigencies. In providing these regulations conferences should be held with representatives of interested activities. It must be accepted that the great majority of our citizens, though engaged in lines regulated by law, are sincerely desirous of complying with the wishes of the Government. With the conclusion of peace the United States enters into more intense commercial competition with other countries than ever before, and the prosperity of business and the industries is dependent upon coöperation of our Government with its citizens. There is need for enterprise; the unscrupulous must be given to understand that clean methods of business only will be permitted; that sharp practices

are hurtful not only to those who apply them but to those engaged in the same activities, and to the nation also.

The prohibition bills before Congress, at this writing, have what to us seem serious defects, namely, the great power given to an individual, his deputies or agents, and authorizing this Federal Prohibition Commissioner to issue additional rules and regulations which shall have all the force and effect of the Act itself, the unlimited right of search, and the very severe penalties, which may absolutely destroy a business and ruin an individual although there has been no intentional violation. Many druggists have in the past suffered because of the officious and malicious acts of some inspectors. There is evidence during the past decade of the Federal Government gathering to itself power which has affected every citizen. During the war it was necessary to give unlimited authority to the Government, but the time has now come when there is no need of these extraordinary powers which may endanger democracy.

With the advent of prohibition it would seem that the Retail Liquor Dealer's license goes out of existence. The majority of druggists will meet the conditions of the prohibition laws with careful thought and sincere patriotism, and loyalty to pharmacy. They, practically alone, will have the right to dispense alcoholics for defined purposes, and there is no question but that every scheme and device known to the ingenuity of man will be set in motion to tempt them to violate their obligations. As with narcotic legislation, and probably to a greater extent, there will be transgressors, but we feel assured that the great majority will be faithful. Further watchfulness will be necessary in taking care of physicians who will write prescriptions for those who seek to obtain alcoholic stimulants; in fact, the greatest danger is in such illegal coöperation between disreputable doctors and druggists, just as in narcotic sales.

Druggists are not opposing prohibition, and there is no sound reason why the legitimate sale and use of alcohol should be interfered with. Utmost vigilance should be observed, and it is hoped that the good judgment of legislators will prevail in perfecting legislation and regulations that will work no serious injury to the drug and allied trades, and encourage the manufacture of industrial alcohol for the promotion of American industries.

E. G. E.

COÖPERATION AS WELL AS ORGANIZATION.*

BY J. W. ENGLAND.

What is most needed to-day in American pharmacy is unity of effort—not only better national organization, not only better state organization, but also, better national and state coöperation.

* Presented at annual meeting of Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, June, 1919.