

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

CONDUCTED BY DR. ROBERT P. FISCHELIS.

In the last article of this series we mentioned that a discussion of drug store advertising and selling narrowed itself down to a consideration of the seller or storekeeper, the goods to be sold, and the buyer. Then we discussed the seller, pointing out that it was necessary for him to make a study of the buyer, classifying him as to type of mind and appealing to him accordingly.

Let us now discuss the goods to be sold. We have pointed out a number of times that the underlying reason why people prefer to buy non-pharmaceutical merchandise at the drug store is because of a belief that the druggist handles a better class of merchandise and buys more discriminately. The druggist should at all times bear this fact in mind and take particular pride in purchasing goods of the right quality.

If you were to go to an advertising agency to-day with a product to be given national publicity, the first investigation the expert advertising man would make would be of the product itself. The day is past when a poor product can stand national advertising. Hence the first requirement of any product to be offered for sale is that it shall be able to withstand the most elaborate investigation—to prove its worth in a competitive field. How many pharmacists subject the articles they buy to any definite series of tests in order to prove their sales possibilities?

What are the questions one should ask about a product before deciding to stand sponsor for it as a merchant of the first class? The following seem to be of greatest importance:

1. Is the product really worth while?
2. Does it fill a real need, or is it to be classified as a luxury?
3. Will my class of trade be interested in it sufficiently to buy?
4. Can it be classed as a repeater, or is it in the class of one-time sellers?
5. Does it yield a sufficiently large profit?
6. How much competition is there on the product?
7. What is its past sales record and what are the sales records of similar products?
8. What are the producers doing to push the sales of the article through advertising, etc.?
9. Is it the type of product which will fit in with the usually accepted drug store side-lines?

Other questions might be asked, but if the answers to all of the foregoing are satisfactory, one is certainly justified in stocking the article and backing it.

John Lee Mahin, a well-known authority on advertising, in one of his books points out that a certain portion of every man's income is necessarily devoted to providing the necessities of life—food, shelter, and clothing. Business in these necessities is more or less stable and cannot be influenced greatly by advertising excepting in the matter of switching customers from one brand to another. The dollars which are devoted to the purchase of these necessities Mr. Mahin terms "mortgaged dollars;" in other words, they constitute that portion of the weekly pay or monthly income which must be spent along definite lines. Out of every week's pay or monthly income there is a group of dollars—large or small—which he terms "free dollars." They constitute a surplus which some people save but

most people spend. Every article of merchandise that is salable is sold either to supply an absolute need or a desire for greater comfort. "Mortgaged dollars" buy necessities; "free dollars" buy comforts or luxuries. The sales appeal is different in each case. The seller must decide under which heading each article belongs, and treat it accordingly, from both buying and selling viewpoints. For example, epsom salt used as a drug comes under the heading of necessities—all drugs of proven value purchased as household remedies can be thus classified. There can be no question as to what kind of epsom salt to buy. Only U. S. P. quality will be satisfactory, no matter whether the trade is rich or poor. On the other hand, face powder would be classed as a luxury, and the kind or quality of face powder to be purchased for sale in any given locality is determined by the class of trade or, in other words, the supply of "free dollars."

Experience is the greatest factor entering into a consideration of the goods to be handled in any establishment. To gain this experience, constant study of the quality of goods must be coupled with constant study of the people who trade at the store. Trade journals, as well as popular magazines and newspapers, make it possible to add the experience of others to your own.

#### DENTIFRICE FORMULAS FOR THE NATIONAL FORMULARY.

BY BERNARD FANTUS AND CLYDE M. SNOW.

In view of the enormous demand for dentifrice preparations and of the fact that nearly all manufacturers of pharmaceuticals and many retail pharmacists have their "own" formulas for such products, it seems remarkable that there are no official dentifrice formulas. Physicians and dentists, who might desire to prescribe a non-proprietary non-secret mouth wash, tooth powder or tooth paste, and pharmacists, who wish to put up such preparations, ought to be accommodated by a formula, if not in the Pharmacopoeia, at least in the National Formulary. Such formulas ought not only to be as good as, but better than the various proprietary preparations on the market, because they should have behind them the combined wisdom of the medical and pharmaceutical professions. The subjoined study of the subject is offered—not, of course, with any pretense at possession of such knowledge—but to serve as a basis for discussion, criticism, and possibly final elaboration of suitable formulas.

The multiplicity of recipes available in literature makes necessary the development of fundamental principles for guidance in the construction of the formulas.

1. It is an established fact that the mouth cannot possibly be disinfected: for bacteria have a greater resistance against chemicals than the cells of the body. Killing the bacteria would mean killing the cells with which they are in intimate contact, and destroying the lining membrane of the mouth. This is, of course, out of the question. Although it is possible to tolerate in the mouth antiseptic solutions in such concentration as to inhibit the growth of bacteria, such bacteriostatic (germ growth inhibitive) solutions are of value only as long as they are present in sufficient concentration, which, in case of the mouth, is possible for a negligibly short period only, as nobody would care to keep his mouth filled with fluid for any considerable time. *Attempts at imparting antiseptic properties to dentifrices are therefore unscientific.* They are also inexpedient, owing to the bad taste, offensive odor or toxic properties possessed by most of the active agents of this class.

2. To inhibit the growth of bacteria in the mouth and thus prevent dental decay, the presence of culture medium should be minimized by cleanliness. Hence, the efficiency of a