

## EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, EDITOR

253 Bourse Bldg., PHILADELPHIA

### PHARMACISTS SHARE LARGELY IN THE PROMOTION OF NARCOTIC LEGISLATION.

**L**ONG before the Harrison Law was enacted state and municipal regulations had been provided for the dispensing and sale of opium and other narcotics, at the urgent demand of pharmacists. Strange as it may seem, opposition to bills for regulating the sale of these developed within legislatures—some legislators could not understand why pharmacists would ask for restriction of sales unless they were prompted by hidden selfish motives.

In 1903 Dr. James H. Beal presented a draft of an antinarcotic law to the Section on Education and Legislation, A. Ph. A.—“to provide against the evils resulting from the traffic in certain narcotic drugs and to regulate the sale thereof.” (See *Proceedings of American Pharmaceutical Association*, 1903, Volume 51, pp. 478-483, 484-487.)

It is gratifying to note that the Press is coming to a realization that pharmacists regard service to, and protection of, the public of paramount importance in the conduct of their business and profession. Doubtless the Drug Trade Bureau of Public Information is a great help in bringing about a better understanding; a wide distribution and general endorsement of the Code of Ethics by American pharmacists has made editors and laity acquainted with their ideals; there is a growing realization that “faith is the backbone of the social and the foundation of the commercial fabric,” and therein is the strength of society and commerce. In an editorial of the June issue of the *JOURNAL A. PH. A.*, Vol. XII, pp. 481-482, an effort was made to show this relationship as it applies to newspaper editors and pharmacists.

The foregoing is incidental to the real purpose of the comment, which is to place credit for the initiative as well as coöperation in narcotic control where it belongs or, at least, accord to pharmacists due recognition of their disinterestedness in this momentous service to humanity.

It is about fifteen years since the movement for the suppression of the traffic in opium and cocaine became international in scope, and the problem is still unsolved, as evidenced by the recent conferences in Geneva; that it is a subject of commercial interest is shown by the heated contests over related questions, and a complete failure of the purposes for which these bodies were assembled was averted because of the higher aims of the individuals.

In 1909 an international conference on the Opium Question met in Shanghai and as a result a convention for a like purpose was held at The Hague in 1912. The World War checked progress in making the provisions of the convention effective, but the question entered into the Versailles Treaty. Article 295 provides “that ratification of the present treaty should, in the case of Powers which have not yet ratified the Opium Convention, be deemed in all respects equivalent to the ratification of that convention.”

In The Hague Convention an agreement was entered into by the British Empire, China, France, Holland, Japan, Portugal and Siam, "to put an end to the manufacture of prepared opium and the internal trade in it, to prohibit its importation and gradually to bring about complete suppression of its exportation."

The two conferences in Geneva were necessary so the United States (not being signator to the League of Nations) might officially participate, and the activities of its representatives in the second conference have been very much in evidence. The purpose of the conferences was to make the provisions of The Hague Opium Convention effective, or, perhaps better stated, to make the loose verbiage of the conclusions of that convention more specific. As the United States is not a member of the League of Nations an Opium Control Board has been arranged for, in the selection of which this country has a voice.

While the conferences have not been eminently successful, progress has been made. This comment, as stated, is not for the purpose of discussing the problem but, incidentally, to point out that pharmacists have always been concerned in effective rational regulation of the manufacture and dispensing of narcotics, so essential and important in the *Materia Medica* and relatively dangerous and far-reaching in their evil influences.

E. G. E.

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#### MOST EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS NEED SUPPORT; ALL OF THEM SHOULD RECEIVE ENCOURAGEMENT.

**T**HE lamented President Wilson's "fourteen points" persuaded others at the time to formulate a relative number of points applicable for other activities. Falling in line with the thought at the beginning of a New Year, "Nineteen Thoughts for 1919" were prepared for the January JOURNAL and some of these have served for the texts of a number of notes and editorials since that time; the substance of two of these paragraphs is as follows:

"Citizens are entitled to a safeguard of their health as much as of their property. Diseases are man-made, but they cannot always be avoided because of the ignorance or indifference of the disease-germ producers and carriers. The community should have the counsel of those who lay claims to a knowledge of these subjects. Chemistry, medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy have joint responsibilities in this connection. Coöperative work in research is incumbent upon the votaries."

"The public has a right to expect and investigate the coöperation of industries and professions, and to determine whether they are giving it the best service and protection possible. There is a widening field of medical science before us in which chemistry, medicine, dentistry and the departments of special and direct concern to pharmacists should find much to do. Research and development are partners—the public is the beneficiary."

The most potent measure of an understanding of the mission of professions is reasonable, rational discussion, prompted by the purpose of devising the best means for public service. The relationship of the arts and professions referred to suggests close coöperation of the votaries, but each class is best qualified to render service in the department for which the individuals have been trained by experience and education. Coöperatively there are opportunities for greater service thereby, which should receive encouragement from those so engaged—the citizens generally

and states. The result of such coöperation should find expression in support given to schools and laboratories and thereby increase their usefulness.

This comment was prompted by several editorials, not all of them of the same purport but related, because the trimming of budgets entered into the discussions. One editorial referred to the cutting down of appropriations for certain educational institutions and the other related to a reduction of the money allotted to several hospitals and, it was said in that connection, the shortage was more than made up by pay-patients. However true it may be, there is the possibility of inferior or inadequate service and of not as promptly responding to the needs of a greater number requiring such attention. All of this may not have occurred, but it may be questioned whether it would be better for a community if an institution was not compelled to adjust its expenses as indicated; nor, as in the latter instance, to increase the number of its pay-patients and create a possibility of withholding benefits from those whose enforced idleness means a general loss to the community—for sickness represents a liability that must be paid for in some way. However much fellow-feeling and humanity may enter into the sending of serums across the continent in record flights and the race against death, and at the risk of death in air-plane travel to the stricken in our far-away Alaska, it also bears witness to the value of health and human life.

Notwithstanding the hurry in present-day activities the time is approaching when it will become a more general practice periodically to have the human machinery examined for defects, and this brings into coöperation all branches of medicine, inclusive of pharmacy, and points out that those so engaged in these professions can and will do better work if a basis is established which will enable them to fully coöperate in a coördinated service. The establishment of the Medical Centre in New York is a step in that direction and a college of pharmacy should be a part, as embodied in the plan of Admiral Dr. William C. Braisted. Pharmaceutical research is a division of medical research and the latter is not complete without the former. The progress of medicine has been wonderful and its discoveries are of inestimable value; however great these may be, it is reasonable to hope for the prevention and cure of maladies which are still subjects of medical research.

Institutions of the medical branches should be grouped if not linked. Encouragement given by the alumni and citizens generally, financially and otherwise, to institutions engaged in educating and training those who will "carry on," represents an investment the returns from which are in service rendered—active in elevating professional standards and adding to the wealth and health of civilization.

E. G. E.

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"The Museum, will not simply be a collection of curious specimens of the art, but rather an exposition of what pharmacy has done, and what it can do—an adjunct of living, moving pharmacy; a demonstration of operative, theoretical and practical pharmacy, as well as of educational pharmacy, manufacturing and industrial pharmacy. An exposition to which the world of pharmacy—manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer, can make pilgrimages; a place where pharmacy as it was, as it is, and as it will be, is unrolled before the onlooker."—*F. B. Kilmer.*