

OUR PROBLEMS.*

BY SAMUEL S. DWORKIN.

I wish to emphasize the impossibility of covering all the problems and conditions affecting our profession. I will present only a few, with the hope of arousing discussion and discovering a remedy.

PRESCRIPTION DEPARTMENT.

The prescription department, as was shown in my reports at the New York State conventions, is suffering from "Too many proprietaries." My investigation disclosed that over 75 per cent of the prescriptions compounded throughout the State call for proprietary products of one kind or another, in some localities as high as 95 per cent. For the last two years, by the collection of data on the question of "Increase or Decrease" of prescriptions in drug stores, I have found a noticeable decline, fewer prescriptions being filled throughout the country generally.

This condition is due not only to physicians prescribing proprietaries (the result of such prescribing being well known, as it creates "self medication" with increase in "counter sales" of such remedies), but is also due to the tremendous increase in hospital activities, private sanitariums owned by physicians, the development of "Medical and Health Centers," the growing popularity of the "drugless treatment" by various cults, the medical advice given by practically every daily and monthly publication in the country, the modern modes of living and sanitation, office dispensing, treatment with X-rays and other medico-mechanical inventions. The so-called "Needle Treatments" are also contributors to the condition of fewer prescriptions as is also the increase in the sale of strongly advertised home remedies.

PRICING OF PRESCRIPTIONS.

The pricing of prescriptions is also unsatisfactory and a nation-wide agitation to adopt more uniform pricing would be of great benefit to pharmacy.

NEW REMEDIES.

The problem of New Remedies must be solved by a National Committee on New Remedies, recognized by the Government. Until that time our shelves will be packed with so-called scientific preparations manufactured in this country or imported from various countries, many of which will be recognized as "Old friends in new dresses."

PROHIBITION.

The Effect of Prohibition upon Our Profession.

- It has resulted in bringing dishonor upon our profession.
- It has produced two standards of ethics and morals.
- It has resulted in unwilling violations of law.
- It has caused abnormal increase in number of new drug stores.
- It has produced a vast number of new remedies.

* Read before Section on Commercial Interests, A. P. H. A., Philadelphia meeting, 1926.

It has destroyed our own manufacturing of galenicals.

It gave "a bartender's tone" to the druggist.

It has created a new definition of a pharmacist—a "bootlegger."

It produced an influx in the colleges, "with the result of an over-production of pharmacists and naturally the non-absorbed over-stock is looking for business creating the condition of "too many drug stores."

In short, it has shattered our profession.

It changed the old-time apothecary shop to an up-to-date establishment with a "soft drinks" department.

It gave the pharmacy free publicity with head lines on the front pages.

It gave us a new class of patrons.

It created an ill-feeling between the proprietor and the clerk.

It lowered the professional dignity of the pharmacist.

It resulted in high rental of stores.

It created liquor selling jobbers, with results known to the retail drug trade.

It demoralized our profession.

TOILET ARTICLES DEPARTMENT.

Government statistics show that the consumption of toilet goods is increasing rapidly each year. In 1920 the Secretary of the Treasury reported \$750,000,000 spent for toilet goods. Of this \$125,000,000 was spent in drug stores, \$315,000,000 in department stores, and \$310,000,000 through other channels, as 5- and 10-cent stores, beauty parlors, jobbers, barber supplies, mail order houses, etc.

Another statement was made that once upon a time the retail druggists of the United States sold more than 65 per cent of all the toilet goods sold in this country! To-day the retail druggists sell only between 35 and 38 per cent. Personally I am convinced that this tremendous drop in the second statement and the very small percentage in the first are due to our neglect.

The average retail pharmacist has neglected and is neglecting his toilet article department, not only by stocking a poor assortment of goods, but also by poor display of the goods to be sold. Another very important factor is in lack of knowledge of the goods for sale. To sell toilet articles you must understand them, their purposes, uses, etc.

Interesting facts regarding beautification was stated by the cosmeticians at the Chicago National Convention—namely, that more than 500,000 men use cosmetics secretly. Face powder eclipses gunpowder in National value. Women of the United States spend five million dollars a day for beautification purposes, etc.

In my opinion, women visit drug stores more often than any other store except groceries. Young women, with growing necessities, with broadening desires for all the luxuries and, nowadays, with increasing means to buy, have created a condition of possibilities for enjoying a tremendous volume of business in toilet articles.

To sell more cosmetics, you must necessarily appeal to the women who desire them. With a complete stock of one or two lines of well-known products, with a knowledge of the talking and sales points of these products, through knowledge of their uses, results will be produced.

The drug business is going through the greatest change in its history. Through development of a great variety of side-lines, soda fountains, "quick restaurants," etc., in many localities there is a spasmodic action and creation of a loss in business and desire to "increase." But this "branching out" is in many cases detrimental to the best interests of the retail pharmacist, through dividing capital, attention and, most important, service; in short, he is robbing himself of good, solid and profitable business in cosmetics, toilet articles and perfumes.

Although perfume shops are an economic evolution, I claim that the neglect of the druggists in this department has acted as a revolution in the industry. To protect yourself against the rapidly advancing wave of chain and department stores and 5- and 10-cent establishments—as they are developing more and more, opening stores in localities of the "most traffic, absorbing the largest percentage of the buying public and selling them articles previously sold in our stores—study their methods.

When, three years ago, I, as a chairman of the Commercial Interests Committee, of N. Y. State Pharmaceutical Association reported at a State convention on the growing menace in the manufacture for these stores of 10-cent sizes of standard products, no action was taken. My report was taken as a "good story," but what is the situation to-day? You can buy the best imported lines in these stores and all the nationally advertised toilet lines are bidding for their business by getting up special packages for them.

It is too late to pass resolutions against manufacturing 10-cent sizes, as there is a very extensive demand created for small sizes, not only because of the price, but because they are convenient sizes for temporary use. A prominent five and ten cent store sells more than \$3,000,000 a year of a certain 10-cent olive soap, and three or four times the amount of cold creams and tooth pastes and other toilet articles. As to the manufacturer, many claim this is a profitable business and a good medium of advertising.

I do not favor the 10-cent size in perfumes and face powders, as it cheapens the brand, but the lure of big business is so great that the manufacturers are overlooking this feature.

There is only one thing that will protect the independent retail pharmacist and bring more customers to his store with a possibility of selling them other products, and that is, to adopt the chain stores' methods—stocking more toilet articles in popular sizes.

Many will object, claiming this to be turning a drug store into a five and ten cent store. I do not believe it will. Establishing cigar agencies in drug stores, covering the front of the store with well known "Red Signs," thus changing the appearance of a drug store to that of a chain cigar store, which is the mother of the first "Drugless Drug Store," is more dangerous and detrimental to our stores than selling 10-cent sizes of merchandise.

FUTURE DATING.

This problem is of importance, as more and more manufacturers are adopting this method, which I claim is detrimental to the interest of the retailer. It is a bait to buy heavier. It is an inducement which creates a dead stock of merchan-

dise. It robs the small retailer of the possibilities of carrying a variety and in many cases is a direct cause of cut prices.

Retail pharmacists should accept future dating only on items such as Peroxide, or Milk of Magnesia, as certain sections of the country have to stock their requirements for the winter, in advance, or on orders placed for holiday goods, as gift boxes, etc.

Time will not permit me to cover more, hence, I will finish this little paper with another problem which is also of importance.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLES.

As we know, vast quantities of samples distributed through our stores are given away to children. This creates a competition not only in prices but in the number of samples given to the child—many sales are lost because of shortage of samples. The children and even adults travel from one store to another, samples constituting the stunt of a bargain. Hordes of children invade drug stores with the demand for samples, thus creating dangerous conditions, because of the responsibility incurred.

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

Chairman Hunsberger said that Mr. Dworkin had brought out some of the pharmacists' problems which require consideration.

Mr. Goeckel said the writer did not take into consideration that many of the younger doctors were in the Army (during the late war) and the older ones were doing the prescribing. He was of the opinion that pharmacists were somewhat at fault in the matter of insisting that pharmacists be employed in hospital dispensaries. The young doctor studies the Pharmacopoeia and National Formulary, when he comes to the hospital his desire is to prescribe according to the standards, but he finds the shelves filled with ready-made preparations and he soon falls into the way of using these. This situation would be largely corrected if pharmacists were in charge of the hospital pharmacy and dispensary.

Mr. Schmitter referred to his experience as a former hospital apothecary in saying that the preparations used in the dispensaries were largely dispensed by number; those who dispense these preparations are minor employees; the pharmacist and an assistant handle the work.

Mr. Smith said that in Brooklyn graduates in medicine were supplied with copies of an "Epitome" of the National Formulary and U. S. Pharmacopoeia, and the pharmaceutical organizations endeavor to have physicians prescribe. Three or four thousand copies are annually distributed among physicians of New York and Brooklyn. Other propaganda is also carried on and this work has been conducive to developing the writing of prescriptions by physicians and those in hospitals prefer to prescribe according to the U. S. P. and N. F. rather than by number. The work carried on by the pharmaceutical organizations in and about New York and Brooklyn has proven to be well worth while.

ACADEMY OF MEDICINE JOINS BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU.

The Academy of Medicine of Toledo and Lucas County has become a member of the Toledo Better Business Bureau, and has completed all necessary affiliations to protect the economic interest of its members. The Better Business Bureau movement has spread throughout the country until there are now about forty-five bureaus in various cities. Its objects are to prevent deception and increase public confidence in advertising; to reduce

unfair competition and to educate the public to understand the practice of honest business. Among other things, it has recommended to the newspapers and other advertising columns certain standards in medical advertising, and has therefore been of assistance in eliminating from a portion of the press the misleading statements of medical quacks.

It will readily be seen that there is necessity for giving consideration to business in medical practice, as in all other professions and arts—to transact business honestly and fairly applies to trades as well as professions.