

as any other one thing. Further, to save the independent at all, from now on his education must make him just as cultured, just as broad, just as adaptable, just as skillful as any other group in the complex community life in which he is to serve. Education, and not legislation, is, I believe, his only way out.

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

James H. Beal, in discussing the paper, stated that for a number of years pharmacy has been scattered all over the shop and it was questioned whether all parts could be put together again. There had been times when he had been almost hopelessly discouraged, but he did not feel that way any more; the type of young men going into pharmacy had encouraged him. He referred to Benjamin Franklin's remarks at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention in 1787—he had been wondering whether the sun on the back of the President's chair was a rising or setting sun—with the successful conclusion of the day's work Franklin believed it to be a rising sun; so the speaker felt, because of the incoming young men and women that the sun of pharmacy is rising.

Rudolph H. Raabe agreed with the foregoing speaker that pharmacy was progressing.

THE RETAIL DRUG STORE A NATIONAL NECESSITY.*

BY R. E. LEE WILLIAMSON, BALTIMORE.

I believe there is no one in this audience who will dispute the statement made by me in the title of this paper. I believe that anyone who will give the matter a moment's serious thought, be he a layman or a pharmacist, will confirm the statement that the Retail Drug Store is a national necessity. That being accepted, why should I presume to present, to you of all men, an address which has for its purpose, judging from its title, an effort to influence you to accept the fact set forth as being a fact when you have no contrary opinion.

Let me, at the very start, assure you that I have no such intention. It is, however, my purpose to proceed immediately on the basis that you are convinced beyond any doubt that one of the vital necessities of the nation is the Retail Drug Store; and then, if possible, to arouse in you a keen sense of responsibility, and through you as leaders in pharmacy, this sense of responsibility in other members of our profession, so that this necessary service of the Retail Drug Store to the people of the Country will be preserved and improved that it may meet the requirements of the ever changing conditions and customs of living. To preserve the Retail Drug Store and improve it, there must be, on the part of every pharmacist, a willingness to look squarely in the face the changes that are constantly taking place in the business methods of our day and time; to face these changes without prejudice—with a determination to adjust our business to them; not trying to accomplish the impossibility of fighting against a modern trend.

I am convinced that the Independent Retail Drug Store can maintain its position of respect and confidence in the mind of the public—preserving its professional standing as a pharmacy and at the same time conducting a retail drug business on a dignified modern and profitable basis. But, to accomplish this, there must be given an open-minded consideration of the modern methods of conducting the retail business. We must clearly understand that new methods are adopted because of the demands of the people and the necessities of the times. They are

*Section on Commercial Interests, A. PH. A., Rapid City meeting, 1929.

not put into effect to suit the ideas of a radical merchant. They are put into effect, however, because the forward-looking merchant is alive to the wisdom of meeting the requirements of the public and catering to its needs in the manner that is not only attractive to it, but is demanded.

For many years the professional and scientific side of the retail drug business has been alert to the opportunities of pharmacy and has advanced in its methods and procedures—it is not of this side of the retail drug business that we are concerned in this address—it is of the business side of the retail drug store that the serious-minded retail druggist is concerned—in fact, many are alarmed, and it is to this condition that I am hoping to direct your thoughts. To-day the retail drug store, as a unit of retail distribution of merchandise, covers a wide expanse—it is most elastic, its confines are anything but rigid—however, that is not a new condition—forty or more years ago, the drug store was bounded on one side by quinine and castor oil and on the other side by paints and window glass and to-day these boundaries are on one side antitoxins and animal glands to mystery novels and electric coffee pots on the other. This condition for our purposes is immaterial for always there has been and will be a proper and dignified middle ground. Such conditions are not problems of a serious or vital nature as they are dependent upon the whims and tastes of an individual. All of the drug stores that have been started and all that will be started, have just two foundations to build upon. The first of these is the foundation of the Prescription Department where all else is secondary when it in any way detracts from the importance of that department. The second is the foundation of merchandise handled and sold, without regard to its effect upon the Prescription Department and the profession of pharmacy, in fact, making pharmacy secondary.

Built from the first foundation will grow a real retail drug store; built on the second foundation will grow an Oriental bazaar labelled "Drug Store"—but the public will know.

How can the independent retail drug store maintain itself in this day of intensive competition? In approaching that angle, let us call things and people by their right names—not in an ugly manner or spirit, but rather in a manner careful not to give the impression that we are antagonistic, but that we are simply trying to intelligently discuss and analyze an established condition.

When we look over the period of the last thirty years in the retail drug business, to my mind, there are three things that stand out: Price Cutting, Price Maintenance Laws, Chain Stores. What influence have they had in the past and what do they mean in the future for the Independent Retail Druggist?

To-day, there is no such thing as price cutting. When everybody does the same thing, then that practice becomes the established standard.

Price cutting is now leveled down to what you might call a level of prices. They fluctuate up and down—they may be eighty-nine or seventy-nine, but the main level is there and must be accepted, because the public has been educated to that level of prices.

The price maintenance law has not, so far as I can see, accomplished anything yet for the good of the druggist. I am frank to confess that we are further ahead toward probably getting a price maintenance law in the Kelly-Capper Law than we have ever been. I hope to see the day when that bill will be passed and then

we will be able to see its benefits and services. Up to the present time it has accomplished, as an influence on our business, nothing, except to retard us, because it has clouded our vision to the other things to which we should have turned our attention, that we should have spent our money for and that we should have had our minds actively engaged in. Had we spent half the time, half the money and half the energy in trying to meet in the retail drug store the modern method, the accepted method of conducting a retail business, we would have been further ahead than we are to-day. The effect it has had on the independent retail druggist is just as I have said. It has retarded his progress as a modern storekeeper.

THE CHAIN STORE.

What has the chain store done and what is the chain store? The chain store was simply a natural growth in the first place of some ambitious retail druggist who saw he had energy and ability enough to manage more than one store.

It is not so very difficult to manage two stores. It is not a difficult trick to manage three stores, and so on as we go in ascending progress. The chain store was simply the development of man's ambition to expand his business. Those were the individual chains, local chains, but then what happened? Then came the national chain. What was the origin of their growth? Why did they grow? They grew because a group of men or a man saw an opportunity to expand the retail drug business to meet the modern tastes and requirements and demands of the consuming public, and that was made possible by the negligence of the retail druggist himself.

You can look back at the grocery store which has been hit the hardest of all retail stores by the chain plan, and all chains are alike—grocery, drug, cigar or what-not. Can you picture the old grocery store? The flies had a picnic in the sugar barrel; the mice played golf in the rice barrel, and the cats slept on the spinach. The store was sticky and dirty from the drippings of the molasses barrel. Modern people demanded something different. So the chain store stepped in and put in a clean store and the mice hunted another golf course and the flies another picnic ground and the public were pleased, and the chain grocery store, because the independent grocery man had lost an opportunity to sense what the public wanted and demanded, flourished

Take the chain cigar stores. Before the Chain Cigar Stores came into existence, 90 per cent of the cigars, cigarettes and tobaccos were bought in drug stores and about 10 per cent in the old-fashioned tobacco stores. What happened when you and I went into a drug store to get a cigar? We first had to make a loud noise to let the proprietor know we wanted to buy a cigar. Usually we rapped our nickel on the counter. Then he came to us and waited on us. What did we get? We got the cigar that we asked for in a bad, damaged condition, dry as powder and without flavor because it had been kept improperly and had been neglected. The Chain Cigar Stores capitalized on just those two things—prompt, careful, polite and quick attention to the customer and the cigars in the condition that they should be and they built their business on that. All just because the retail druggist neglected to take account of what the public wanted and demanded.

Then came the chain drug stores, and the chain drug store, without talking about price cutting, without talking about advertising to attract the public, set up

a drug store that was clean; the merchandise was arranged attractively, the windows were polished, the lighting was done scientifically and the clerks were polite and quick to wait on those who came in. Those are the fundamentals of the chain drug store, and it grew because the independent druggist of other days had not seen the trend of the times. His ear had not been down to the ground.

What does Dr. Copeland of the Harvard Bureau of Business Research say? Let me read you just a line of what he says:

"The fact that so few units, individual stores, have materially improved their methods of management and operation points to one of the major reasons for the continued chain store growth."

He is a disinterested observer, a scientific observer, if you please, without prejudice. He is not speaking of just drug stores but of all the chains.

While I am on that subject, quoting outside criticism, which is the helpful criticism, in the *World's Work* not more than six or eight months ago there appeared an editorial on chain stores. These editorials are written by men especially equipped to write editorials; they are hired and employed for that purpose; they are keen observers and able to write the things they see. The writer, after going over the growth of chain stores, sums up his entire survey and remarks on chain stores with this paragraph:

"It is fitting that the growth of chains should be challenged and analyzed, but there is little likelihood that the development of more soundly managed chain systems will be retarded. What is certain is that under the new regime only those independent merchants who can keep up to the new standards of efficiency and competency will survive."

And that is as true as God made little apples. Only as you can keep up to the standards of efficiency and competency will you survive.

Without holding any brief for chain stores, either for or against them, I say to you gentlemen in the retail business, the chain store is the last word in efficiency in merchandising and good storekeeping. And good storekeeping covers it all. Good storekeeping, good housekeeping—walk into a home—the instant you step over the threshold you know whether the housewife is a good housekeeper. Walk into a drug store and you immediately know whether he is a good storekeeper. Copy the methods of the chain store in storekeeping and you will go a long way toward correcting—the diminishing of total sales and net profits.

The independent retail druggist is in a more preferential position to combat the chain store than any merchant in any other line is to combat the chain in his line. Chain stores are impersonal. They are simply machines. There isn't any personal contact. The public of this country in their drug dealing want personal contact; they want personality and they are going to eventually demand it. So if we druggists will capitalize that one thing, that priceless ingredient to quote one of our contemporaries—of their personality and individuality—plus their professional training, and then take note of the present trend of merchandising, (not prices—you have got to make your prices conform with the accepted level), he can and will succeed in conducting a profitable business.

Twenty-five years ago locomotor ataxia was a disease; to-day it is a dance. Things are going faster. You have to take that into consideration. What can be done? What is there available? There is the machinery available to preserve,

maintain the independent retail druggist in business profitably. He is a necessity. You don't doubt that; I don't think you will dispute that with me. He is as great a necessity as the water supply of this town is a necessity to its citizens. I wager that the people of this town are alert and keen to see that their water supply is not contaminated or lessened. So we, as the leaders in pharmacy, must see to it that the service that is necessary is rendered properly and in a manner that is acceptable and helpful to the public.

We have the personality of the individual druggist in his contact with the public, and its confidence and respect has not yet been dissipated. They still have it; they still believe in the pharmacist. He stands equally in the public's respect and confidence with the professions of medicine, law and theology. They still look up to him as a professional man, a man in whom they can place their confidence, and you have got to safeguard that by letting the public know just how you stand and how you feel toward your business. With these fundamentals, with a lower cost of doing business than the chain stores, lower expense figures by at least 2 to 2½ per cent, you have that edge on the chain store, but you have got to be *good* storekeepers. Every drug store is equipped with scales, balances, spatulas, bottles, corks, labels, all the way down to cigars and the soda fountain. I wonder if they are equipped with two of the most important pieces of apparatus, namely, the dust cloth and the mop. They often look like they are absent. If you haven't got them, get them and put them to work.

In your city, every druggist's city, there is a professional engineer on illumination. Consult him. Have your windows and stores lighted right. Sell those things that are normally found in the drug store and that the public expect to find there. The public smiles when it sees coffee pots on sale in a drug store, it doesn't enhance their respect for the druggist. I don't have to go into those things. Accept those things that are so obvious and apply them to your business. The independent retail druggist is an integral part of the social make-up of our country. He is a necessity, a national necessity, and it is up to us to be willing to accept those things that are beneficial, that are helpful and that are being used and constructed for our benefit. Nothing can be done without you making the effort to help yourself.

Pharmacy Week is a wonderful thing—a propaganda carrying to the people some idea of what the drug store is and what it does. There is where we have been lax. We have not blown our trumpet as we should. Medicine has never hesitated to blow its trumpet. Medicine has never hesitated to let the public know of its efficiency and necessity. Let us as pharmacists carry on a propaganda teaching the public what pharmacy is and what it stands for. Pharmacy is being accepted more as a necessary profession than ever before, but it is up to us to persistently inform the public about Pharmacy and its importance to the Public Health—for Pharmacy is the foundation stone of the Drug Store and the Drug Store is a National Necessity.

ABSTRACT OF PAPER, SCIENTIFIC SECTION.

"The Mercuration of Phthaleins in Neutral Solution with Bichloride of Mercury," by Frederick R. Greenbaum.

Series of mono- and di-mercury compounds

made when neutral solution of sodium salts of phthaleins act with boiling concentrated solution mercuric chloride.
