

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE U. S. P. X TEST FOR "FOREIGN GUMS" IN TRAGACANTH.

BY R. A. KONNERTH.

The test for "foreign gums" in Tragacanth was introduced in the U. S. P. IX and carried over in the U. S. P. X. This test was applied to numerous samples of whole and powdered Tragacanth during this period with satisfactory results. Since February 1928, however, practically no Tragacanth could be found that would comply with this test.

During the week of August 13, 1928, the following observations were presented to the Plant Science Seminar held at Boston, Mass. They are herewith repeated for the purpose of further discussion and proper revision of the test by the U. S. P. Revision Committee.

In the test given on page 408 of the U. S. P. X, under "Tests for Identity and Purity" of Tragacanth, second paragraph intended for the detection of foreign gums, reads as follows:

"Shake 2 Gm. of Tragacanth with 100 cc. of water until fully swollen and free from lumps, then add 2 Gm. of powdered sodium borate, and shake the mixture thoroughly until the salt is dissolved; the mucilage does not lose its transparency, nor exhibit any change in consistence, and on pouring is not slimy or stringy even after standing twenty-four hours (foreign gums)."

We found that when the powdered borax is added to the properly prepared mucilage and the mixture is shaken as directed until the borax is dissolved, a fairly firm jell forms within 10 to 30 minutes. This jell retains its consistency practically unchanged for more than 72 hours. Such a jell when formed in a 250 cc. Erlenmeyer flask cannot be dislodged even with violent shaking.

The gums tested represent very clean, white and perfect A-1 ribbons, complying with all other U. S. P. tests. The poorer grades on the market also fail to stand the U. S. P. test for foreign gums.

The writer believes that the market is flooded with one or more of the Asiatic species of *Astragalus* (Fam. *Leguminosæ*), which do not stand the U. S. P. test for "foreign gums."

It would seem desirable that this test be either revised or eliminated.

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## SPECIFIC GRAVITIES OF FIVE OFFICIAL SYRUPS.\*

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The work represented in this paper was undertaken with two objects in view (1) to facilitate grading our students upon syrups they prepare in the laboratory, (2) to help establish official specific gravities for these syrups in case this be deemed wise by the committee for revising the Pharmacopœia.

Experience teaches us that frequently students are more concerned about finishing preparations rapidly and getting credit for the work than they are about

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\* Section on Practical Pharmacy and Dispensing, A. PH. A., Portland meeting, 1928.