

EDITORIAL

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ANOTHER YEAR FOR WORK AND PROGRESS.

THE first of a year establishes a period of adjustment of activities, a time for taking stock and laying plans for continuing and energizing work. Optimism may be followed by disappointment, but pessimism is seldom helpful in correcting unsatisfactory conditions. Pharmacy has made progress during the past few years because pharmacists are developing a higher appreciation of their profession which will be strengthened by a militant optimism.

A desire to be helpful and to cooperate has characterized pharmacists, but they often lack in appreciation of their profession and its services; the plans for higher educational standards should be strengthened by a corresponding higher valuation by the members of the profession and stronger assertion in behalf of a recognition of these efforts. Pharmacy has a large part in public health service and the public has a right to it; therefore, the people need enlightenment through cooperation of the divisions engaged in public health work and in the related activities wherein the production and application of materia medica are concerned.

The Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, stated October 22nd at the dedication of the new medical building, University of Virginia: "Modern medical knowledge is abundant, but the people as a whole are not getting full advantage of all the forces available in this field." He also said, "newspapers and the radio have informed the public that medical knowledge is not being adequately disseminated, and people are seeking relief and reaching out for means and methods which will bring it to them, regardless of residence or economic condition."

Surgeon General H. S. Cumming has said, in substance—"the only sure foundation stone for the edifice of public health is the close and sympathetic association of enlightened, intelligent medical men in private practice with trained local health organizations, coordinated and assisted by a thoroughly organized state health department provided with sufficient personnel and equipment to exercise those functions which cannot be carried on efficiently by local organizations."

"The functions of the Federal Government should properly be to carry on research through its Public Health organization in solving states in times of emergency or during the period of development of their state and local organizations. The problem may not be solved either by official or voluntary effort directed exclusively towards one group, conditions or disease, but rather by well-developed and coordinated effort against all conditions which militate against good health. Nor is the problem to be solved by any written formula applicable to the country as a whole, but largely by the interested groups in each community meeting conditions peculiar to itself as they may arise, in collaboration with state and national groups."

The public has a right to expect and investigate the cooperation of industries and professions, in order to determine whether they are giving it and those engaged

in the Governmental divisions and activities the best service and protection possible. The most potent measure for bringing about an understanding of the mission of professions is reasonable, rational discussion, with the purpose of devising means for being of service to the public, and in this service pharmacy should share and not be hampered in developing its opportunities, stimulated by motives that bespeak merit.

The fullest measure of success is possible only when all the divisions of pharmacy and the drug-trade activities are united in their common interests and are convinced that coördinated coöperation strengthens a cause and indifference hinders or makes success more difficult.

RECOGNITION OF PHARMACY IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

PHARMACY is given the status and responsibility of a profession in civil life by the laws of each state in the Union, and by numerous decisions of our courts. Its educational requirements, its literature, its ethics, its contributions to the sciences and the arts, and its services as a public health agency clearly entitle pharmacy to the status of a profession.

Unfortunately, pharmacy has not been properly recognized in the several governmental services in which the preparation and dispensing of drugs and medicines is necessary or where the special training of the pharmacist is required. It is difficult to understand why our soldiers, our sailors, our marines and our disabled veterans and their families have not been given, voluntarily, the same pharmaceutical service and the same protection in that service that each state in the Union requires by law for its citizens. The Public Health Service has maintained satisfactory requirements for members of its Pharmaceutical Corps for many years but has not given them commissioned status. Pharmacy was classified as a sub-profession in the classification set up by the Personnel Classification Board of the Civil Service about ten years ago and this is quite important, when it is recalled that pharmacists enter the several services of the Government either by enlistment in the Army or the Navy, or through the Civil Service.

It is of no consequence now to discuss why these conditions exist or to try to fix responsibility for them—whether they are deliberate or thoughtless is beside the question. It is important, however, to correct them in the interest of those who are entitled, by every consideration, to the best health service obtainable, and in the interest of the profession itself. Pharmacy cannot advance as it should as a profession so long as it is classed and treated as a sub-profession by our governmental agencies. Pharmacy cannot render a proper service so long as the best trained and best equipped pharmacists are not attracted to the Government services because of the unsatisfactory conditions under which they are asked to serve.

Four movements are under way to correct the conditions referred to:

1. A bill is now before Congress, known as the Parker Bill and bearing number H. R. 3142, which provides for the commissioning of pharmacists in the regular corps of the Public Health Service on the same basis as are medical and dental officers. This measure has the support of the Public Health Service, has

the endorsement of the national pharmaceutical associations and several state associations.

2. A bill was introduced into the Seventieth Congress to provide for a Pharmacy Corps in the Medical Department of the U. S. Army. A hearing on the bill was held by the Committee on Military Affairs of the House on February 22, 1929, and representatives of pharmacy presented a strong case which impressed the committee. The bill died with the close of Congress on March fourth.

The same bill has been introduced into the present Congress and bears the number H. B. 8473. The measure is opposed by the Surgeon General of the Army. It has the approval of every national pharmaceutical association and of practically every state association. It was endorsed by the Spanish-American War Veterans' Association at its 1929 encampment and by the American Legion at its 1929 convention.

3. A bill, H. R. 12,672, to provide for a commissioned medical service, including a medical, dental and nurse corps, in the Veterans' Bureau has been introduced into the present Congress. The physicians, dentists and nurses of this service are now on a civil service basis as are the pharmacists. A protest against the omission of a pharmacy corps has been made and representatives of pharmacy have been invited to present their case at an early hearing on the bill with the object of having provision for a pharmacy corps included, by amendment, by the Committee on World War Veterans' Legislation to which committee the bill has been referred.

4. In 1928, the ASSOCIATION filed a protest with the Personnel Classification Board against the classification of pharmacy as a sub-profession and a request that it be transferred to the professional and scientific classification. Evidence in support of the protest and of the request was filed. On October 4, 1929, a lengthy hearing was held before the Board at which time representatives of the ASSOCIATION, the National Association Boards of Pharmacy and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy explained fully the requirements for the education and licensing of pharmacists in civil life and the recognition which pharmacy had received as a profession. It was emphasized that the present classification was unfair not only to those in the service but to every pharmacist in the country. The members of the Board showed a great interest in the matter and an evident desire to be fair in their conclusions. A new classification will be issued at an early date and it is confidently expected that pharmacy will be given the classification requested.

These four efforts will be followed aggressively until the conditions are corrected and the pharmacists of the country will be kept advised of the progress made. A united and persistent effort will bring the results expected.

In the meantime, pharmacy has been given very encouraging recognition by a governmental bureau. In Bulletin No. 7, 1929, issued by the Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, pharmacy schools and colleges are included in the list of accredited higher institutions of 1927-1928 with schools and colleges of other professions.—E. F. K.