

years. He advertised in the school paper and the "Annual." Occasionally he was asked to address the students and he always responded. The high school purchased from his store its supplies of adhesive tapes, bandages, iodine, liniments, etc., for the athletic teams. He subscribed generously to everything pertaining to the school whenever he was approached. It followed that his store first enjoyed a good high school patronage, then it became a rendezvous and finally a "hang out" for high school students. He handled phonograph records in his store and had a phonograph upon which to demonstrate them. The day came when the moment the afternoon session at the high school was over, the students—male and female—came flocking to his store for sodas, frappés and entertainment. They were greeted and served by one or more of their classmates who were working behind the fountain. The students placed jazz records on the phonograph. Dainty slippers and heavy English brogues were soon tapping and shuffling to the irresistible strains of the jazz band. Prospective customers who came to the door were met with an astounding scene and noise; they paused and turned away. Fortunately for his business, this druggist discontinued selling phonograph records, and the phonograph disappeared from the store. High school patronage fell off somewhat, but the general business showed a marked increase.

The many problems involved in successfully conducting a retail drug store, although perplexing at times, make the drug business interesting. There is an irresistibility in connection with the drug business which fascinates and holds those engaged in it, and even though they often complain about it, they are loth to leave it.

KEEPING INDEPENDENT.*

BY EDWARD S. ROSE.

A much used, misused and abused term in the drug field to-day is the "independent druggist." It is much used, because big business especially is bending its efforts to interest in one way or another the independent druggist. The term is misused, because when a druggist has gone into the schemes that promise co-operation he is no longer independent. It is abused, because big business interests are continually promulgating propaganda to make the druggist believe his very existence depends on their coöperation.

What is the independent druggist to do? Will he become a part of this gigantic plan of jobber and manufacturer, who promise such willing coöperation to the end that the druggist will find his path in business a "bed of roses?" Perhaps the pendulum is swinging in that direction. It will continue to swing in that direction until the independent druggist sits down and clearly thinks it over. It seems to be the way of the world for us to be swept off our feet by some new movement, without giving it careful, earnest thought.

The writer will try to show how much and why our store out in Iowa is trying to be independent. For over fifty years we have avoided compromising alliances which might in some way impair our freedom of action and thought.

Turning to Webster we find that the word "independent" is defined as, "not dependent; free; not subject to control by others; not relying on others; not sub-

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

ordinate; self-governing; sovereign; not contingent or conditioned—" In our endeavor to remain independent we believe we are fulfilling these terms.

AGENCY LINES.

An agency line never appealed to us. We much prefer to build up our own lines. Why should not every druggist make his own line of household remedies, for example? There are many objections offered, but not worth while ones in most instances. The matter of labels has been a problem for some, but we solved that difficulty in the purchase of a multigraph and a few fonts of type. Many druggists have taken on agency lines, not because of lack of knowledge or ability to manufacture, but from an ever-present human failing of following the path of least resistance, for it is easier to buy than to manufacture. Here, we are maintaining an independent position in "not relying on others" for a line of household remedies, and it reacts to our advantage. We are saving money. It helps to give a professional atmosphere to the store and is an advertisement. The customer is required to return for additional purchases. The secret of every successful business is in getting repeat sales. Why should any druggist run his business so as to build up a demand for a line of products of another if there is a way out of it, for he has no way of knowing when he may lose his agency rights?

WINDOW SPACE.

We have always controlled our window space. We do not accept deals that are conditioned upon allowing a window display. The writer believes it is poor business for a druggist to buy a large quantity of goods, then give over window space, and work "tooth and nail" in order to move them. The druggist who aligns himself with a service movement and allows some one at a desk in a distant city to dictate what shall go into his show window from week to week, has certainly lost freedom of action and in turn much of his independence. If a window space is equal to one-fourth of the store space for display value, it certainly behooves the druggist to control what shall go into it.

PACKAGED GOODS.

In packaging household items under our own label we have always felt somewhat independent. The writer assumes that a large number of independent druggists buy these goods already packaged. Why should they? We find it better in every way to package them ourselves. There are twenty-five or more items that we buy in barrel, drum or one hundred-pound lots, at favorable quantity prices. We are able to package these goods at a considerable saving. Also we are in this way able to select high-grade goods and thus keep items uniform in quality. Our label on each package is an advertisement for our store, usually bringing back the customer for repeat business.

PRESCRIPTION DEPARTMENT.

We have always maintained a prescription department. Pharmacy depends on this department for its professional existence. We feel that we would not fulfill the expected services of a pharmacy if we did not fill prescriptions. The druggist who has given up the prescription case has surely slipped; he has lost a very large

part of his professional standing in the community and much of his independent position as a servant in time of need.

PHARMACEUTICAL PREPARATIONS.

We have always wanted to use our ability and assert our independence to some degree in manufacturing all pharmaceutical preparations that we could at a saving. The number is large, there being some ninety preparations, many from all classes, except pills and extracts. This work keeps us feeling more professional; it gives us an opportunity to make use of some of the training we received in college. And last but not least we find we are again saving money.

BUYING.

The retailer who has an established credit, who is thoroughly familiar with markets and values and who has the technical knowledge and industry to test his purchases, gets as much for his dollar as any chain or like combination can get. Such a one will develop needs for quantities that he may buy from first hands at very favorable prices. We give a great deal of thought and attention to buying. Not only do we purchase many raw materials in quantities, but buy direct a number of lines of household, surgical, sick-room and nursery products.

So to-day we find things are moving very fast. What the future has in store for the druggist no one seems to know. We can only visualize. Mergers, consolidations, stock-selling schemes, coöperative service offers, agency lines and what-not, are being used to interest, snare, corral and tie-up the independent druggist. Appealing offers of dividends from stocks, helps on how to run a drug store, furnishing window displays, advising how and when and where to buy, lending financial assistance, etc., all of these are being offered just to help the independent druggist remain independent and succeed in his business. Will they do it? The writer recalls an old saying, "There's a string tied to it or of course they wouldn't do it." If the independent druggist will but think it over carefully he will realize that he does not get something for nothing. If he is to receive assistance in running his business, be it financial, coöperative buying, representing an agency line, free window displays, helpful suggestions, etc., he becomes a part of a compromising alliance which will affect his freedom of action and thought as an independent druggist—to the end that he may become a servant of a large corporation, a member of a gigantic chain or perhaps just a manager.

In conclusion the writer believes our store is following the better way in keeping the business free from entangling alliances and truly independent.

BOERNER'S PHARMACY,
IOWA CITY, IOWA.

PSITTACOSIS.

Several cases of parrot disease (psittacosis) have recently been discovered in Atlantic Coast States. The death rate in cases among humans from the disease is quite large. The

symptoms of the disease among humans are similar, at first, to those of typhoid fever. The germ of the disease is thought to remain around the beak and mouth of the parrot and is communicated by contact.