

the average size of sale, its perishability, attractiveness to the eye, must all be ticketed and measured as merchandising factors. The merchant must be led to abandon the point of view that he is running a drug store as too simple for present-day conditions. He must think of himself as being in the tobacco business, the candy business, the electrical goods business and other lines according to the range of commodities which he is handling. It should be possible to deduce from this detailed study of departments what are sound rules of merchandising to be applied to each commodity group. Each commodity group has its own peculiarities which may require some difference in treatment by the management.

In addition to studying all these things inside the store, a means must be devised for studying the community which surrounds it. In this community will be found explanations for many things which might at first seem surprising which are observed within the store itself. As a matter of fact, it would be impossible to say conclusively whether a druggist was doing a good job or not until it was known what kind of a community he was serving and what sort of merchandising it required.

Furthermore, it would not be possible to extend the findings of a drug store survey to other parts of the country unless it were possible to set forth specifically the market conditions prevailing in the city under survey, and as already described, it would be found essential to the complete picture to know many things about the wholesale distributors who were supplying merchandise to the dealer. Many specific problems will have to be determined as to the scope and character of a survey when the industry is ready to launch upon it definitely.

I have attempted to outline in only the broadest fashion what would seem to us to be the most fruitful approach as based on our experience with the Louisville Grocery Survey. Such a survey could scarcely fail to produce the same sort of practical benefits which are now being reported from Louisville and the food trade throughout the country with regard to the grocery investigation.

EDITOR'S NOTE: See Resolution No. 33, JOUR. A. PH. A., for May, page 526. Also brief reference to the Survey in this issue, and Minutes of the Section on Commercial Interests.

THE DRUGGIST? WELL, WHAT ABOUT HIM?*

BY ROBERT J. RUTH.

"The druggist is a poor business man." "He does not keep abreast of the times." "He lacks the progressive traits of men engaged in other callings." "He hasn't the push and ambition necessary to accomplish big things." How often we have all heard the above remarks. They are uttered by men, themselves druggists, who repeat them upon every possible occasion, otherwise we would not hear them so often. These men constitute a very small minority of retail druggists and the remarks that they make are perhaps applicable to only themselves, if at all. They could benefit by reading and following the advice given by Charles Dawes as published in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION and reprinted under the heading: "Charles Dawes' Creed—a Paraphrase," in

* Section on Commercial Interests, A. PH. A., Baltimore meeting, 1930.

the March 1930 issue of the *Pennsylvania Pharmacist* (page 4). Mr. Dawes says:

"If you work in a profession, in Heaven's name work for it. If you live by a profession, live for it. Help advance your co-worker. Respect the great power that protects you, that surrounds you with the advantages of organization, and that makes it possible for you to achieve results. Speak well for it. Stand for it. Stand for its professional supremacy. If you must obstruct or decry those who strive to help, why—quit the profession. But as long as you are a part of a profession do not belittle it. If you do you are loosening the tendrils that hold you to it and with the first high wind that comes along you will be uprooted and blown away and probably you will never know why."

The writer is convinced that all of this talk and fault-finding about the druggist is unfounded, unjust and unfortunate. It is doubtful if any other class of business or professional men could pass through a transitory period which called for such radical changes and readjustment in their businesses and emerge as successful, clean and optimistic.

As recent as the waning years of the last century, when the writer was a small boy; even in the early years of the present century when he first started to work in a drug store, the pharmacist conducted his business in an entirely different manner than it is possible for him to conduct it to-day. Rentals were comparatively low, as were all other items of overhead. Chain store competition was unknown and while the cut-price practice did exist to a limited extent in some of the larger cities, it did not present the problem that it does to-day and did not exist for the druggist located in the small city or town. Pharmacy was practiced in a leisurely fashion. There was time to chat with patrons when they came to the store and with neighbors and friends when they just dropped in to visit and not to buy. Window displays and counter displays were not considered so tremendously important in any line of retail business as they are to-day.

As it was the ambition of most boys to work in a drug store, the druggist picked his apprentices with extreme care and he took a keen interest in their proper training. Consequently he secured valuable help at a small cost.

Then came the great magician who changed the entire picture. Just who he was cannot be determined. As time is not measured to-day by centuries but by millions of years, he came with blinding speed and he brought with him the new era of invention which has produced the automobile, radio, airplane, moving pictures, television, etc., he brought with him the Narcotic Act, the World War, Prohibition, the high cost of living, the Jazz Era, the post-bellum period of readjustment, the Income Tax, chain stores, cut-price wars, rackets and racketeers, gangsters and gunmen, crime waves and crime commissions, bootleggers, high-jackers, speak-easies, night clubs, theme songs, station announcements, press agents, Rudy Vallee, consolidations and mergers, the stock investment craze, the collapse of the market, "Amos 'n' Andy," the Peace Conference and many other media, laws, instruments, monstrosities and abominations for good or evil which have produced sorrow and joy, headaches and hysteria, multi-millionaires and paupers.

The druggist? Well, what about him? Don't worry. He has survived the dazzling era of "what next and what of it?" Here he is now. Yes, things are tough in the drug business, but he has a new suit on and he is driving a new car of

good make. He owns a nice home and has a summer place and the children are away at school. How lovely! Let's look at his drug store.

This is his store—the one with the modern front and the shining plate glass windows—the finest store in the block. See how well his windows are lighted. Look at the beautiful window displays. Let's go inside. Isn't it a handsome store? Modern fixtures, excellent merchandise, attractive counter displays. The store is splendidly lighted and immaculately clean and well arranged. Certainly different from the drug store of 1900.

How could he accomplish all of this if he is a poor business man? The answer is that he is a good business man. Of course, there are exceptions just as there are men in all businesses and professions who fail in one way or another to achieve success. But by far, the majority of druggists do keep abreast of the times. They do possess progressive traits. Who owns the most attractive, cleanest, best lighted, best serviced store? The druggist.

This transitory period has been a trying experience for him. His overhead has mounted tremendously. The rent has been increased each time that the lease has been renewed until it looks like the new census figures. Economic conditions have caused him to commercialize his store more than he should perhaps like to, but the public is partly to blame for this. It demands many things for its convenience and the pharmacist never loses sight of the fact that the public must be served. Nor has he permitted this commercialism to interfere with the splendid professional service which he continues to render in the interest of the public health.

The pharmacist of to-day has developed into an expert buyer of a multitudinous variety of merchandise. He is a past-master in the art of salesmanship. He is a credit man, an accomplished writer of advertising copy, a student of psychology, a philosopher, a staunch friend and a good citizen. He is an alert business and professional man, active in civic affairs, the neighborhood friend and counsellor. He deserves the public trust and he gets it.

When the Federal Narcotic Act was passed, the Government did not hesitate in deciding the question of who would be the legal custodian of drugs. Not only was the pharmacist best fitted because of his professional qualifications, but his moral responsibility was immediately given proper consideration. The best proof that the pharmacist has not betrayed the trust and confidence placed in him lies in the fact that the number of pharmacists prosecuted for violating the Federal Narcotic Act is so small as to be practically negligible when compared to the number of drug stores in the country and the great number of prosecutions of people not related to the profession. Even more cheering is the knowledge that of the small number of druggists prosecuted, the majority of them were accused of technical rather than criminal violation.

Again, when the Federal Prohibition Act was passed, the Government asked the pharmacist to be the legal custodian of alcoholic spirits for medicinal use. Unfortunately for the good name of Pharmacy, Prohibition opened up a lucrative avenue to many who were not pharmacists but who would prostitute the profession for ill-gotten gains. It is to be regretted that adequate laws do not exist to prevent them from embarking in the drug business as they have caused all pharmacists much embarrassment by furnishing a great deal of unfavorable publicity for Pharmacy in addition to creating a serious economic situation because of the multiplicity

of drug stores. Needless to say the reputable pharmacist derives little or no profit from the handling of narcotic drugs and alcoholic liquors for strictly medicinal purposes and that he handles them at all may be attributed to his desire to serve in the true spirit of his profession.

The introductory paragraphs of the report of the Commonwealth Fund Pharmacy Study (JOURNAL A. PH. A., Vol. XIV, November 1925, page 961) are applicable at this time:

"Pharmacy is an ancient and honorable profession. Its beginnings are lost in the mists of antiquity and its history is replete with substantial accomplishments. It is the mother of medicine and the original source of many forms of research. Numerous investigators who have made epochal contributions to science and art have been enrolled among the members of its followers. To-day pharmaceutical research is scholarly and productive. In the laboratories of two continents scientists are industriously and effectively studying the problems of the field.

"Yet, at the present time, the profession is undergoing a heavy barrage of criticism. The assertion has been made that it has been commercialized and has sunk to the level of soda-fountain dispensing and the rule-of-thumb shop keeping. Claims are made that it has become a purveyor of illegal drugs and liquors that keeps just within the boundaries between legality and crime. It is usurping the functions of the doctor by counter prescribing. It is said that it is pseudo-scientific without intelligent grasp of the sciences which it pretends to utilize. Some critics say that in the effort to commercialize the occupation, the ancient professional morale has been lost, with the result that the occupation has ceased to be a profession and is now become a trade.

"It is, therefore, of interest to examine this vocation which in numbers is not inconsiderable and in history is rich and worthy. To know with some definiteness just what the pharmacist does, what place he fills or may fill in society, how much he needs to know, and what sort of training should be given him in order that he may properly and intelligently fulfil his functions is a matter of major social importance. The criticisms just enumerated become immaterial if a picture can be drawn showing the full round of the responsibilities of the pharmacist and the amount, the depth and the extent of the training which is needed adequately to fit him to fulfil his obligations."

A picture is now being drawn, each year, which does show the amount, the depth and the extent of the training which is needed adequately to fit the pharmacist to fulfil his obligations. The picture is presented to the public during Pharmacy Week. That this effort is bringing about a fuller realization and deeper appreciation of the service of Pharmacy is borne out by the following editorial which appeared in the Newark (N. J.) *Sunday Call* and which was reprinted in the *American Journal of Pharmacy* (Vol. 102, March 1930, page 130):

"There is rightly the highest esteem and trust for the ancient and honorable calling of the apothecaries. Thus, when the modern brethren of these faithful servants of the public, the pharmacists, have the question put to them by some of their own guild, whether they are not going after strange gods in these days of business expansion, we listen with interest and respect. We appreciate the jealousy expressed regarding conserving the honorable traditions of the centuries, but confess at the same time inability to discern the dangers some learned pharmacists proclaim.

"The drug store—that is purely an American name which custom prevents us discarding—is an institution of this country, developed by ourselves, essentially democratic, and, aside from any business considerations, contributing importantly to public health and general welfare. The druggist is one of the few persons in the body civic that everyone believes and trusts. Around this faith has grown the atmosphere of a community personality which even the chain pharmacy has been unable to destroy. In neighborhoods away from commercial centers, the drug store not only has maintained but has extended its eminence as a personal and private possession of

each of its customers. Safeguarded by laws and regulations of their own advocacy, druggists occupy a position of minor priesthood and the faith is not misplaced.

"The introduction of such things as soda water, candies, restaurant service, books, cutlery, photographic supplies, tobacco, stationery, and things similarly far removed from medicine, is not alone the result of economic pressure. True it is that pharmacies would rapidly disappear if dependent upon prescription income alone and that many such important branches of the business are practically service at a loss, but it is also true that the institutional developments are the product of demands by the American people. When a drug store does something that the public does not like, it will hear from it quick enough. That is because every one tells his troubles to a druggist, who knows and keeps enough secrets to wreck a community's peace.

"A few years ago a movie was produced in which a great star failed simply because the scenario told of a druggist who sold bad securities to his customers. Not even the fact that he made full and honorable restitution saved the piece. The public didn't like it because it attacked one of its cherished faiths. We do not see any abatement in this popular confidence, though we honor those of the New Jersey profession who have voiced fears lest this regard be lessened."

The druggist? Well, what about him? "K. C. B.," the famous columnist, has this to say about him:

"So many times
I've had a thought
Of our neighborhood druggist.
And I haven't done it.
And now it's Christmas
In a couple of days
And we ought to be kind
To everybody.
And I'm going to make this
A Christmas card
For neighborhood druggists
Everywhere.
And I'm going to say
That remembering back
As far as I can
To my youthful days
And coming on down
To my middle years
There's been no time
I can recall
When there hasn't been
A neighborhood druggist.
A man of patience
Who knew the trials
And the tribulations
Of every family
In his neighborhood.
And who advised
On everything
From an ailing pet
To postal rates
Or human ills
Or what was best

To remove grease spots
From this or that.
Or what would he do
For whatever it was
That no one else
Could be asked about.
A man of patience
Who worked all day
And every night.
Week days and Sundays.
And sold a stamp
Just as cheerfully
As he'd sell to you
Something left over
From the year before.
And why it is
That just to-day
I've again been thinking
Of neighborhood druggists
Is that our druggist
Who knows our secrets
And everything
Has sold his store
And is going away.
And another druggist
Has come among us.
And the neighborhood
Is all upset.
Though all of us know
It won't be long.
And the new come druggist
Will be one of us.
I thank you."

**The AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION Meets in Miami in
1931.**