

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Conducted by Paul C. Olsen.*

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TOO MANY DRUG STORES?

BY PAUL C. OLSEN.

The answer to the question "Are there too many drug stores?" has been affirmative for many years in the United States as indeed it has been in many other parts of the world. There seem to me to be two basic reasons why limitation by restriction of drug stores in the United States is impracticable, if not impossible.

Nothing is further from my intention in the following paragraphs than to minimize the importance of professional pharmacy. I have maintained repeatedly—in these columns, and elsewhere—that the professional side of pharmacy is fundamental not only to professional but to business success.

My purpose here is merely to emphasize that many people in the United States would be denied the services of trained pharmacists if the practice of pharmacy were limited only to those stores in which the practice of pharmacy constituted the only, or virtually the only, activity.

I also have tried to emphasize in the following paragraphs the fact that success in the practice of the profession of pharmacy cannot be assured by legal restrictions. There are, to-day, in the United States many hundreds of prosperous and growing professional pharmacies which succeed because, in the population centers in which they are, there is a sufficient volume of professional business to be obtained with initiative, tact and professional skill to permit them to devote themselves exclusively to this class of business.

Of course, the protection of the public health requires that many preparations be dispensed only by professionally qualified persons but the real foundation of the pharmacist's successful professional service to his community is his professional integrity and standing, rather than legal restrictions.

I made the statement that "there seem to me to be two basic reasons why limitation of drug stores in the United States is impracticable, if not impossible," in spite of a knowledge of the situation in many cities in which druggists, after years of sacrifices, have developed a business which pays a fair living only to have it swept away in a single night by the opening of a competing store across the street, or close by, to share a trade which is not sufficient to support two drug stores.

The remedy for this situation, I feel, is education. The second store loses just as much and often more than the original store. In other words, there is nothing

* Lecturer on Business, Columbia University and Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science.