

Section on Pharmacopœias and Formularies

Papers Presented at the Sixtieth Annual Convention

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE A. PH. A. COMMITTEE ON THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPŒIA.

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In the absence of a report from the committee as a whole the Chairman submits the report as an expression of his individual views.

The work of this committee as defined in chapter X, Article X of the by-laws of this Association is three-fold. In the past this committee has confined its efforts largely to the noting of errors of any kind found in the U. S. P. and to suggesting improvements in processes, etc. The committee this year finds itself embarrassed along these lines by the lack of available material on which to work, since it is obvious that further criticism of the U. S. P. VIII is useless and that suggestions relating to the U. S. P. IX are presumptuous.

Your chairman, recognizing that the members of his committee were also members of such important committees as the Committee on the Revision of the U. S. P., the Committee on the National Formulary, and the Committee on Unofficial Standards, and realizing that these important activities are absorbing all of their available time and energy, has not outlined any specific line of work during the year.

This committee as a whole has in the past made but little effort to exercise its function of collecting statistics regarding the frequency with which official and non-official remedies are used in medicine. This has been due largely, we believe, to the difficulty in securing reliable data and to the fact that generally speaking statistics are dry and uninteresting. If this committee is to serve the Association along this line, the chairman feels that the appropriation of a small sum to defray clerical expenses will be necessary. The third and last function of this committee is to endeavor to ascertain the general wishes and requirements of the profession throughout the country in regard to any desired changes in the Pharmacopœia.

The chairman has felt for some time that something should be done to promote a more favorable attitude toward the Pharmacopœia among physicians. This feeling has become so strong as to amount to a conviction and it is this part of the committee's work that has engaged his attention during the past year. As might be expected, there is a sort of general apathy in pharmacopœial matters at this time. Some of the men who have felt very strongly have already expressed themselves and are content to await the result before launching forth anew, while others in the absence of any definite information concerning the

progress of the U. S. P. IX believe that it is useless to anticipate the demands of the U. S. P. X.

As the result of considerable conversation, observation, and correspondence, your chairman is convinced that the U. S. P. does not measure up to the expectations or desires of the various interests centered in it. This is unfortunate and must in some way be remedied. As one practicing physician puts it, "The doctors don't know much about the book." A canvass of physicians' libraries will, I believe, bear out the truthfulness of his assertion. Relatively few of them possess a copy of the U. S. P. Why is this? The answer is obvious, the book does not contain sufficient material that is vital to his successful practice and so he is learning to do without it. That the physicians are not indifferent to the importance of a pharmacopœia is evident from such assertions as the following, coming from leading men in the profession. One physician writes to the effect that "Owing to the press of other work I must decline your kind invitation to contribute a paper. However, I do not think that you are missing anything, for all my suggestions do not seem to have had any visible effect." Another writes, "So much has been written by the medical profession regarding its ideas of pharmacopœial revision that I do not feel that anything more need be said. I for one do not feel like making any further effort to present to the pharmaceutical profession the wishes or ideas of the medical profession." Another writes to the effect that he would be glad to see an A. Ph. A. section on the U. S. P. and N. F. established where physicians and pharmacists could meet on common ground, where pharmacists could discuss things of interest to physicians and where physicians could discuss things of interest to pharmacists. This assertion but confirms the contention of Professor Oldberg for a sixth section in the A. Ph. A.

Since the U. S. P. and N. F. have been made legal standards, those who are intrusted with the enforcement of the Food and Drugs Law frequently find that these standard works are inadequate for their purposes, and they are desirous of revision along lines suitable for law enforcement. Pharmacists also apparently find the U. S. P. and N. F. insufficient for their needs and frequently substitute for one or both a dispensatory or some other more elaborate formulary. The result of this must necessarily be a state of growing dissatisfaction. At the present time there are several standing committees whose aims are to improve the standards of the U. S. P. It is true that these committees were not formed at the request of the U. S. P. C. Committee of Revision, but their work is not without value, and it is the growing belief that these various committees should be brought into closer harmony, and that to make their work more effective these committees as such should be officially recognized by the U. S. P. C. Committee of Revision. In this way much of the work of revision might be accomplished in advance and at a saving of considerable energy which is now apparently lost in duplication.

The original intent of the Pharmacopœia was to secure for the physicians uniformity in drugs and medicines. This primary idea in many cases seems to have been overlooked at the expense of the pharmacist and the annoyance of the physician.

Your chairman is convinced that in order to harmonize these various interests an entire reorganization and adjustment is necessary. The Pharmacopœia should

be published in three volumes. Two volumes should be of primary interest to pharmacists; one of these should be essentially a book of simples. It should comprehend all drugs and simple preparations that are used by physicians of what-so-ever school, giving appropriate titles, descriptions, and tests for same. Deletions should be unnecessary, but admissions should be made as rapidly as demanded by physicians. The other volume should be a formulary pure and simple. It should contain standard formulas for such medicines as are demanded by physicians in their regular practice, such medicinal preparations to be made from the standard samples. The third volume should be the physician's handbook and contain only such matters as are of interest to physicians in their practice. The editing and revising of this book should be intrusted to the best physicians, foremost pharmacologists, and therapeutic experts of the country. The information contained in this volume would have the stamp of authority in all medical schools. It would thus be possible to place in the hands of physicians the latest information concerning drugs, without in the least depriving the older members of the profession of their favorite drugs simply because modern experimentation had failed to show that they were physiologically active.

Necessary additions should be made annually by supplement and complete revision made, say every ten years. In this way the pharmacists would exercise only their legitimate function—that of placing the stamp of approval not upon the drugs and preparations but only upon the methods of selecting, testing and preparing them. Those entrusted with the enforcement of the sections of the Food and Drugs Law would thus be provided with sufficiently comprehensive standards.

By so doing, it is believed that physicians can advance the science of therapeutics as rapidly as they desire without seriously disturbing their less progressive brothers, while pharmacists can also progress without requiring the busy physician to revise his materia medica every ten years. In this way it is believed that these great interdependent interests may be satisfactorily served and brought into harmony.

GETTING READY FOR THE 1920 PHARMACOPOEIA.

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The Committee on Pharmacopoeia of the American Pharmaceutical Association being a continuous body, might well take in hand matters pertaining to the 1920 Revision. Sub-committees from this Committee could begin at once the standardization of potent drugs; working out simple and reliable tests of identity and the detection of impurities and adulterants; testing working formulas for the galenicals; ascertaining to what extent the various drugs, chemicals and preparations of the Pharmacopoeia are used, and gathering general information, that will be useful and of value to the Committee having in charge the revision of that period. This will enable the Committee to get the Pharmacopoeia into the hands.