

Section on Education and Legislation

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BUSINESS AND THE OPIUM TRAFFIC.

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"If opium were taxed \$5 per pound, smuggling would cease and the Government would obtain a large revenue," said U. S. Customs Surveyor Duncan E. McKinley yesterday in discussing the matter.

"It is impossible under the present conditions to prevent the smuggling of opium at this port. It would require about 100 men to guard properly one of those big China steamers."

"Opium in large quantities also is being brought into this city by railway from Mexico, hidden in consignments of merchandise and the baggage of passengers. There is no reward for the informer and therefore no incentive for any one to cooperate with the authorities. Hence I believe in the levying of a duty on the drug."

The above is a quotation from an article which appeared in a recent Sacramento paper under the title "Stop Smuggling by Taxing Opium."

Here we have isolated the germ which is causing the malignant growth of the traffic in human lives and the souls of men, through the use and abuse of narcotics. What is the use of a state like California spending large sums of money, through the Board of Pharmacy, in trying to abate this scourge when a U. S. Customs Suveyor advocates such sentiments as expressed in the above interview.

"The Government would obtain a large revenue." Yes, and so would the people who would debase the weak and unfortunate through the sale of the opium to the slaves of the drug.

This is where the restrictions in the sale and importation of narcotics hits the hardest, not only in the United States, but in every country on the globe; this is the same old cry that is heard when any reform for the wellbeing of the people is advocated, this shout from the cold-blooded commercial system of the world, "It hurts business."

It is this phase of the narcotic situation that has come most strongly to my notice, for my official duties bring me in contact with it from every angle. Often a physician has reported to me that a patient of his is receiving treatment for a narcotic habit from a so-called doctor in some other state, and upon examining the remedial agent sent we find it to be essentially a solution of morphine or other habit-forming drug. We cannot stop this importation into our state, all that we can do is to arrest the user when the narcotic is found in his possession,

for in California it is against the law for any one except a licensed physician, dentist or veterinary surgeon to have such drugs in his possession.

Are we, as representatives of an ancient and noble profession, going to allow this blot upon our calling to remain? Or are we going to fight commercialism and see that those who are engaged in this terrible business are placed where they belong, and that our country does not sanction the traffic by imposing a duty upon smoking opium, even if it takes a thousand men to inspect a China steamer or to inspect all of the consignments of merchandise, or the baggage of passengers from Mexico?

DISCUSSION.

Mr. Lichthardt said that California had at The Hague Opium Conference one of the three commissioners appointed to represent the United States, and he wished that the members would read some of the speeches made at that Conference by the representatives of the large countries. There was one representative who said it was necessary to feed opium to certain people because they demanded it; and yet, on reading between the lines, it was evident that the purpose was to keep these people in subjugation. The reason for the existence of the narcotic evil was because there was money in it for some people. The whole Pacific Coast was confronted with this great narcotic question. Not only was it the opium question, but they had a lot of Hindus there who carried their hasheesh in their turbans, or had it in sticks and put it under their lips, or snuffed it to produce cannabis indica intoxication. He had brought this question up three years ago before at this Association, but it wasn't considered big enough to engage its attention. Since then, Italy and Portugal had brought it before this Opium Conference in Holland. He expressed his conviction that the place to stop these things was at the start, instead of trying to stop the flood when the dam was broken.

Mr. Charles J. Clayton, of Denver, gave it as his opinion that the placing of a tax upon the handling of an article as a restrictive measure for the sale of it was a fallacious procedure. When a man had imposed upon him a tax for the sale of liquor, for instance, if he had no desire to sell liquor before, he now felt the necessity of getting back the money he had paid as a tax. Should a tax be placed upon the sale of opium, there would be all the more inducement for those who smuggled opium to avoid the tax, because they could make a larger profit thereby.

Mr. F. T. Gordon, of Philadelphia, responding to Mr. Lichthardt's remarks in regard to the motive for the sale of opium, said that the Government of India drew a large part of its revenues from the tax on opium. It was a matter of history that England went to war with China back in the fifties to force China to open her ports to the opium traffic. England claimed that large parts of India were dependent upon the cultivation of the poppy plant as the sole means of livelihood and support; but the motive of the government officials was to get that tax from opium.

China, he said, was doing her best to stop the traffic. He knew from personal information that large tracts of land formerly used for cultivating the opium poppy were now used for ordinary cultivation, and that the stoppage had caused real distress among the agricultural population. The real "nigger in the woodpile" was the desire of the Indian Government to continue the cultivation of opium because of the revenue derived from it.

Mr. Thomas F. Main, of New York, remarked that Mr. Gordon was relating ancient history, and that today Great Britain was a member of The Hague Conference and had joined the other nations most heartily in the effort to abate the opium traffic.

Dr. Albert Schneider, of San Francisco, said that among his friends in San Francisco was one Lung Ko Chu, a Chinese editor, who had made a trip to China not long ago, and on his return called on him and said: "You understand that the Chinese nation has about succeeded in getting rid of the opium habit," but added that, in Northern China, the American Tobacco Trust had sent a small army of young men, who were instructed to distribute cigarettes free of cost to the Chinese people. The method was somewhat as follows:

A young man assigned to a certain town or district would go to a street-corner, light a cigarette and begin to smoke. Pretty soon a crowd of men, women and children would gather around, and he would hand out the cigarettes to them; and it was proving a very simple method of teaching the Chinese the cigarette-smoking habit as a substitute for the opium habit.

Dr. Schneider said this had struck him as being a highly contemptible practice, and the American nation and the British government were placed in the inconsistent attitude before the world of doing all they could at the Opium Conference to stamp out the opium habit, while at the same time they were doing nothing whatever to prevent the introduction of a new habit equally as bad. This situation was accentuated from the fact that, as his Chinese friend had told him, while the American Tobacco Trust had established three large cigarette-factories to supply the Northern-China field, they were doing nothing at all in Southern China, for the simple reason that that territory had been turned over to the British manufacturers, who had full possession of it and were making cigarette-smokers of the Chinese in that great division of the Celestial Empire. Lung Ko Chu had told him that one of the first things that happened upon his arrival in China was to have offered to him some cigarettes, with the statement that it was now the custom of all the officers and officials of China to smoke them.

Mr. Lichthardt said the statement had been made at his State Association in June by Mr. Finger, their official representative at The Hague Conference, that the Germans had contended that codeine was not a habit-forming drug, and he had requested him when he met the pharmacists of other States to make inquiry if they knew of any real case of codeine habit, and if so, to communicate with him, as he was very much interested in this subject. The question had come up in connection with antikamnia and codeine tablets, and it had been claimed it was an antikamnia and not a codeine habit that was formed.

Prof. W. C. Anderson, of Brooklyn, asked Mr. Lichthardt if it was to be understood that he was in favor of the anti-narcotic legislation proposed at Washington.

Mr. Lichthardt replied that he was not, but had referred to it because it was the first thing that came into his mind. He was satisfied, however, that it contained a lot of things that were bad. He said he would like to see the American Pharmaceutical Association go on record—if it had not already done so—as favoring some kind of restriction of this traffic. There was a little logging train that came into the State of California once a week with this "dope," and he was heartily in favor of some law that would make it a crime to ship narcotics into a State in that way. The figures as to narcotics imported into the United States annually ran into tons as to opium, and thousands of pounds as to cocaine, morphine and the like. Only one or two percent of this large amount was used for legitimate purposes.

Prof. Anderson said his reason for asking the question was that the writer had stated that numerous laws had been proposed restricting the sale of narcotics, and that they had been opposed, because there was money in the traffic. No retail pharmacist of this Association had a right to say that, because the American Pharmaceutical Association, the National Association of Retail Druggists, the State Associations and the Local Associations had all opposed the bill that had been pending in Washington, therefore the retail pharmacists of the country were opposed to the restriction of this traffic. He wanted the retail trade distinctly placed on record as being in favor of the restriction of the sale of narcotic drugs, and declared that there was no body of men that had worked harder for its proper restriction than the retail druggists. They had sacrificed their commercial interests time and time again for the welfare of the public, and would continue to do it. They did, however, protest against the enactment of laws that placed upon them a tax without any effect, and that was just what the laws proposed would do, impose a tax and make restrictions that could not be complied with, making the retail druggist a law-breaker and a criminal, when in purpose and in every sense of justice and honor he stood in the opposite attitude and for the protection of the public in every instance.

Mr. Charles M. Woodruff, of Detroit, said he did not know about what had been smuggled in, but the Commissioner of Internal Revenue had directed the attention of his house to

the fact that since the importation of opium for smoking purposes had been forbidden, the solid extract of opium had begun to be used as a substitute. They had looked over their record of sales for several years back without finding any evidence of that fact, but nevertheless they wrote the Commissioner they would discontinue the sale of solid extract of opium for any purpose, and would inform their branches and salesmen that it had been taken from their list and would not appear in future. He understood that other pharmaceutical houses had followed the same course. The indications were, therefore, that the prohibition of opium for smoking purposes had been effective.

With reference to pending legislation, Mr. Woodruff said that he had opposed the Foster Bill before the Committee on Ways and Means on behalf of six of the large pharmaceutical manufacturers. He opposed it, not because his people were opposed to some reasonable and effective legislation, but for the reason mentioned by Prof. Anderson, that it would impose heavy burdens on the drug trade without restricting the traffic.

He had placed his Association on record, as he had authority to do, as in favor of national legislation to prevent the practical nullification of State police laws by the natural operation of interstate commerce. He held that the States had ample police power to regulate the intrastate traffic in narcotic drugs. The State laws lacked uniformity, however, and were defeated in a large measure by the fact that a citizen of one State could buy from one in another State under practically no restriction except as related to the Postal Laws. It was unlawful now for anyone not a manufacturer or dealer to mail cocaine or any other thing of like character into another State, except to another manufacturer of drugs, a physician or druggist; but that did not restrict the sending of these articles by express or other means of transportation. Mr. Woodruff concluded by saying that he thought the drug trade was a unit upon the necessity of reasonable and effective national opium legislation.

Mr. F. H. Freericks, of Cincinnati, said he did not understand the gentleman from California to say it was the druggist who was at fault with reference to the narcotic evil. He thought he was correct in stating that he had in mind the indiscriminate traffic from other sources, and he believed it was due him that this be stated.

Mr. Lichthardt replied that if any part of his paper could be construed to put the American Pharmaceutical Association in the wrong light, he would be only too glad to strike it out. He knew from experience in his own State that it was not the druggists who were doing these things, but somebody else. He disavowed any purpose of reflecting upon the pharmacists of the United States.

A MEDICINAL PLANT GARDEN 'A VALUABLE ADJUNCT TO A COLLEGE OF PHARMACY.

FREDERICK J. WULLING, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

The fact that the College of Pharmacy of the University of Minnesota, when it was organized in 1892, asked and received authority from the University regents to establish a medicinal plant garden for research and instructional purposes, evidenced on part of the faculty a recognition of the importance of a medicinal plant garden as an integral part of the equipment of a college of pharmacy. Although the garden was not begun until a few years afterward, and then soon abandoned because of its distance from the college (it was made part of the garden adjoining my residence) and because of lack of both the necessary ground and funds, the desirability and even necessity of such a garden was never out of the mind of the faculty, and continued to be a part of my