AN ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPŒIA.*

BY F. W. NITARDY.

When, on the establishment of the first U. S. P., it was decided to revise that book once every ten years, medical progress was relatively slow so that such a decennial revision was adequate to meet purposes of keeping the book up-to-date and in harmony with the developments and progress made. In the one hundred and ten years that have elapsed since the Pharmacopœia was created, there has been a tremendous acceleration in the progress of the fundamental sciences on which it rests and there probably are more scientific contributions in any one year to-day than in ten years one hundred years ago. It is natural, therefore, that the Pharmacopœia becomes definitely out-of-date in reference to some items within a relatively short time. In view of its authoritative standing and legal position it seems highly desirable that some means should be provided which will make possible important changes in periods between appearance of successive decennial revisions so that it will not lag far behind in recognizing important additions to materia medica and utilizing scientific developments and research accomplishments which have a bearing on the tests and standards used in the Pharmacopœia.

The great majority of products recognized by the Pharmacopœia would not undergo important developments, but there always will appear a few products of great importance during a decade which are deserving of recognition and standardization and there are usually also a few products on which standards, processes or tests may experience great development or change. For instance, Insulin, Ephedrine and Viosterol have come into materia medica since the U. S. P. X appeared and have, as you know, assumed very important positions as remedial agents. Biological methods for determining the vitamin content of Cod Liver Oil and other substances have been greatly amplified. Such tests were so new at the time of the previous revision that what now appears to be a ridiculously low standard was adopted for the vitamin A in Cod Liver Oil. Satisfactory methods have been developed for determination of vitamin D, and the Pharmacopœia should no doubt raise its vitamin A standard of Cod Liver Oil, amplify the test method and add a standard and method for vitamin D.

It takes a long time to revise a Pharmacopœia. A new Revision Committee (has) will shortly be elected and before it can get organized and finish the work of revision another five years probably will roll by. It seems undesirable that such important additions and changes in the Pharmacopœia as those above referred to should wait until the U. S. P. XI can make its appearance. Several other items probably require attention, such as adjusting the p_H of Tincture of Aconite with a suitable acid and thereby stabilizing that preparation. No doubt the several years which will be used in revising the present Pharmacopœia will bring with them some new developments in science which will also demand the attention of the Pharmacopœia.

The work of revising the entire Pharmacopœia is such a large task that it probably will be impossible to revise it completely any more often than it is now revised, but it appears that all requirements of keeping it up-to-date and in har-

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mony with scientific advancement could be met by publishing an annual supplement. Such supplement, if published annually during the entire period which elapses between two decennial revisions, would result in the publication of approximately nine supplements for each Pharmacopœia. These supplements could be handled by the regular Revision Committee in exactly the same way as it handles the revision. Additions or modifications covered by such a supplement would probably not be difficult to prepare for publication for the reasons that only important items and changes would be thus taken care of, and there usually is so much scientific information available on these new and important developments that the Revision Committee should not encounter much difficulty in deciding on what should go into a supplement and getting it published on a scheduled date each year. Minor corrections or changes should not be made in such supplement as they would merely complicate the legal situation for the pharmacist.

I believe the Revision Committee to-day has the authority to issue such supplements and I believe that use was made of this authority on previous occasions, but not in recent years or since the U. S. P. X has appeared.

It would seem that a definite advantage would accrue from a thorough discussion of this subject and this is the reason for presenting this suggestion in the form of a paper.

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

Mr. Scoville said that the subject had been discussed by the committees of the last three revisions of the U. S. P.

Mr. Taylor expressed the opinion that important matters, such as new and better standards for Cod Liver Oil, for example, should receive early consideration. The discussions should receive general consideration before final action by the Committee.

Mr. Ruth was of the opinion that there was a possibility of clogging the machinery by too much discussion. The Committee on Revision can be relied upon to render decisions.

Mr. Gidley stated that there would be possibility, unless great care was exercised, of getting preparations into the Supplement, the use of which would be short-lived.

The author of the paper, in answering the speakers, could see no difference in having the Committee revise the standards for the Supplement and preparing them for the next edition of the U. S. P. He held that the Committees are very careful relative to inclusions, and this would apply to the Supplement as well as the Pharmacopœia. He did not think the "New and Non-official Remedies" would take the place of the proposed Supplement; while the N. N. R. had a moral value it had no legal status.

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE.

The Second Economic Conference will be held April 30th, at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science. The program includes the following speakers and their subjects: "What Can Be Done to Prevent the Sale of Active Therapeutic Substances by Those Not Qualified by Law," Robert L. Swain, Secretary of Maryland Board of Pharmacy. "The Merchandizing Area of Your Drug Store—How to Analyze and How to Develop It," George W. Colborn, retail pharmacist of Princess Anne, Md. "Proved Plans for Increasing Drug Store Profits," Paul C. Olsen. "What the Community Thinks of the Drug Store," Prof. Harvey P. Frank. "How Can the Druggist and the Physician More Effectively Coöperate?" V. C. Michels, Chicago. "The First Aid and Home Medicine Service of Pharmacy—Its Psychology and How It Should Be Handled," Dr. Francis W. Palfrey, Boston, Mass. "Windows Stressing Pharmaceutical Service—How Often Should They Be Displayed in a Community Drug Store?" Robert J. Ruth.

Educational and demonstrative exhibits will be a feature of the Conference.