

EDITORIAL

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PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICE IN HOSPITALS.

THERE can be no question that pharmaceutical service in hospitals should be on as high a professional standard as medical or nursing service. The practice of pharmacy in hospitals is becoming a specialized field, in fact, and offers greater opportunities for research work and profitable coöperation with the other public health professions, than is true in the average pharmacy. Mr. Herbert Skinner, who is referred to on preceding page, recently devoted his address as chairman of the British Pharmaceutical Conference to a learned and inspiring discussion of "Hospital Pharmaceutical Service," and it is worthy of careful study. The closing sentences are applicable to all branches of pharmacy:

"If we think more realistically about pharmacy we shall find it plays a practical and useful part in modern therapeutics. Above all, the status of a profession depends upon the ability of its practitioners to make good and for that they must be trained. The only safe way to usefulness is to broaden the base of pharmaceutical training, to create a wider service; then more adequate recognition of our profession will follow as surely as day follows night. The reasonable expectation of the community from our profession is the services we can render in the restoration and maintenance of individual as well as public health."

The AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION has for years been deeply interested in placing pharmaceutical practice in hospitals and elsewhere, in the position to render the most efficient public health service. As is well known, registered hospitals are required to meet certain "essentials" as set up by the American Medical Association through its Council on Medical Education and Hospitals. Some time ago, the ASSOCIATION requested the Council to include a requirement covering pharmaceutical practice among the "essentials" in the belief that this procedure would bring about such improvement as is required.

At the recent Toronto meeting the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, that the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION through the proper offices be instructed to continue its efforts to secure the coöperation of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association in providing proper supervision over hospital pharmacies by the requirements covering approved hospitals."

Recently, the secretary of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals advised that at its meeting in October, the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That a clause be inserted in the 'Essentials of a Registered Hospital' requiring that the pharmacy of a hospital should be adequately supervised and should comply with state laws."

It is a matter of satisfaction as well as encouragement, to report this favorable action by the Council. It will have a far-reaching and helpful effect on pharmaceutical practice within and without hospitals.—E. F. K.

PHARMACY WEEK.

ON another occasion this writer said that in order to be helpful coöperation must come from within the ranks; each division of the drug-trade activities has its peculiar problems, but there are certain efforts in which all divisions can have a part and be mutually helpful. Indecision, indifference and working at cross purposes develops weakness which other groups take advantage of for promoting their own interests.

The public has no clear appreciation of the fundamentally important rôle of pharmacy in the activities included in the drug-trade activities and, as a consequence, is not deeply concerned about pharmacy; this points out one of our duties, namely—to acquaint the public with pharmacy.

Robert P. Fischelis, in a Pharmacy Week radio talk brought out the foregoing, and the *U. S. Daily* recognized the importance of the message, the greater part of which was printed on its last page, which is devoted to messages that the publication deems of value to the public. The *Druggists Circular* said in an editorial, that "editors of drug journals may be depended upon to publish the facts on the druggist's side, but the general public does not read drug journals." Another editorial is quoted and was reprinted in the *Literary Digest*, so was seen by a large part of the public and proved of relative benefit. The radio talk referred to reached not only an audience, but found its way into print and, it may be stated here, the publication reached its own decision relative to the value of the message to the public.

Chairman Anton Hogstad, Jr., last year, at Pittsburgh, interested a multitude of hearers in pharmacy during the annual occasion and, this year, he prepared a number of messages which were heard by members of various organizations and over the radio. One of his talks delivered at New York Branch, A. PH. A. meeting, is part of its program in this issue of the JOURNAL. Pharmacy Week is becoming of greater importance to Pharmacy every year.

The radio talk, published in the *U. S. Daily*, was prepared for a lay audience and, no doubt, served a useful purpose by acquainting the public with the service of pharmacists. The speaker referred to the overhead expenses that do not tax other activities—preservation of drugs, essential care in dispensing, responsibilities in various ways, protecting the public against mistakes and misuse, and for all of these he had practical examples.

Secretary E. F. Kelly, at a district meeting of pharmacists in Virginia, quoted the following findings of the Commonwealth Study of Pharmacy, which offer suggestions that will interest the public and may find application in the addresses of other pharmacists:

"After a careful and open-minded study—for a period of more than two years, the director of the study is definitely convinced that pharmacy is a profession rather than a trade. The materials that the pharmacist deals with are in many cases so dangerous in their effects upon physical well-being, and the problems that face him in the handling of the materials and in his contacts with the public require so much intelligence—if they are properly performed—that it is absolutely essential for him to have a rather wide and intimate acquaintance with the fundamental sciences upon which the art depends.

"Conspicuous among the duties of the pharmacist is the group that deals with public health. Filling prescriptions correctly is, of course, important to the public, as is also the display and sale of reliable products; but in the service to public health the pharmacist serves the public in a unique way. Naturally there are many sources from which the public may secure accurate health information—but the information they provide is general and must be made specific. The pharmacists are therefore more strategically situated than any other group of individuals to give personal advice upon matters of public health on which they are informed."

We quote several paragraphs of last year's editorials which may bear repetition: "Pharmacy Week should induce druggists to think deeply of their obligations to pharmacy and also of the importance of its service. It cannot be accomplished by passive thought, by effervescent enthusiasm, but by realization of the duties and valuation of its service, supported by coöperation in solving problems which are accepted to be of importance to all concerned, including the public and, thereafter, insistence on due recognition backed by a rational understanding and the creation of an appreciation which will offer the greatest opportunities for the development of pharmacy."

"The public can and should be informed relative to the significance of qualified pharmacists for handling medicines of all kinds, drugs, chemicals, poisons, etc., that untrained persons do not, as a rule, know the danger and responsibility in handling medicine. nor the importance of quality and uniformity. Herein is an opportunity for pharmacists; they have been the first to recognize the dangers of narcotics, of substandard drugs and chemicals and have, unhesitatingly, advised the public and legislative bodies of the need for proper regulations, but they have been somewhat backward in insisting that the regulated items should be handled by qualified pharmacists. They have been foremost in the preparation of standards, but have not strongly enough insisted that all who deal in these products should have the necessary knowledge for determining strength and purity, and a realization of their responsibilities to the public.

"Pharmacy Week brings the importance of pharmacy to the attention of the public, but what is needed is constant, dignified observance, and that rational, reasonable information relating to the practice of pharmacy be passed on to the public, just as doctors and dentists have done and are doing."

THE VALUE OF HISTORY IN PHARMACY.

Editor J. P. Gilmour, of the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Pharmacist*, closes an article on "The Origins of British Pharmacy" by saying: "Before any piece of research work can safely be entered upon, the would-be investigator, if he is to avoid the risk of having been forestalled, must read up the literature of the relevant subject. Similarly, if there is to be a correct orientation and interpretation in other pharmaceutical interests and issues, there must be at least a reconnaissance of the ground to be traversed. For these reasons it would be an undoubted advantage to pharmacy, particularly on the scientific, technical and professional sides, if the Conference (British) gave some encouragement to the study of the history of pharmacy by recommending it as a subject for research and communication to its proceedings." The present chairman of the Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. PH. A., has a related thought in mind, as part of the year's work.