

EDITORIAL

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THE NATIONAL FORMULARY EXHIBIT AT THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LA., MAY 9-13, 1932.

FOR the second time, the National Formulary occupied a booth in the scientific exhibit hall at the annual convention of the American Medical Association. This year the convention was held in New Orleans, and although the attendance did not approach that of the Philadelphia session of 1931, the warm and hearty approval of the attending physicians for the N. F. products, which were displayed, was just as marked and thorough as it was at the first showing.

Physicians made notes on the exhibited products, copied the typical prescriptions on their memo pads, sampled this and that, and enthusiastically endorsed the preparations and asked "why more of this was not done," as through these official preparations they seemed to see relief for many of their troubles of to-day.

The booth occupied by the National Formulary was in the center of a busy outside aisle and directly opposite a central aisle, a position of considerable advantage. The available space was about the same as that of last year, a three-sided booth, seven and one-half feet deep and eleven feet long. A shelf ran around the entire unit and the walls were draped with an attractive green material which extended to the floor. The general arrangement followed last year was again adopted in setting up the display, with large neatly printed signs near the top of each of the three walls and columnar signs beneath these, one to each preparation shown, fourteen in all. A small walnut table in the center of the booth carried two vases of flowers on either side of an attractive sign, in front of which was placed an open copy of the National Formulary.

It will be recalled that the exhibit in Philadelphia presented a group of vehicle elixirs and syrups together with typical prescriptions showing the masking qualities of the individual vehicles. Several of these were so outstanding in their value and in their acceptance by the attending physicians that they were used as the initial background in the exhibit at New Orleans and, in addition, several other popular and valuable preparations were added. These products were displayed in glass-labeled containers, bottles and jars, and beside each was a typical prescription showing the actual use of the preparation.

The large cards, previously mentioned, were designed to draw attention to the exhibit with catchy and timely phrases and the wording on the central one proved to be very effective with the following—"National Formulary vehicles make your prescriptions palatable." Likewise, the main cards on the sides were efficient with the one on the left reading—"Valuable N. F. Products—Better Prescriptions—Standard Formulas," while the one on the right carried this message, "Popular N. F. Preparations—Prescribed Daily." Under the latter sign were displayed Alkaline Aromatic Solution, Antiseptic Solution, Compound Mixture of Rhubarb and Glycerinated Elixir of Gentian, four of the most popular of the National Formulary preparations. The individual cards for these carried both Latin and English titles, together with a list of the ingredients; a word or two about the product's particular value and use and a copy of a typical prescription written in abbreviated Latin

form, and carrying the necessary directions for use. Beside each stock container was the filled prescription carrying a special label under the heading of the "N. F. Pharmacy."

The products on the left wing were Solid Petroxolin, Compound Menthol Inunction, Compound Menthol Spray and Calamine Lotion. The value of solid petroxolin was demonstrated in its use in a common prescription of to-day in which Balsam of Peru is prescribed in ointment form together with such items as sulphur and salicylic acid. Using petrolatum as a base, one finds that the Balsam reacts with the powders and produces a miserable looking ointment and one which separates and "rolls out" when applied to the body. However, this can be overcome by the judicious use of solid petroxolin, a preparation which is quite valuable as an ointment base, in many respects. Its consistence is good, its odor is very pleasing and it combines well with the general run of ointment items. In addition, it is of value, also, due to the fact that it is quite definitely absorbed by the skin, a quality which is often desired in an ointment base. Samples of both the good and the imperfect ointment were demonstrated in ointment jars, as well as in a thin film between two plates of glass, which clearly showed the marked differences in the two specimens. This ointment, as well as the compound inunction of menthol, was also put up in prescription form in collapsible tubes.

The "repeat" vehicles which occupied the main section at the rear of the booth consisted of the following:

Red Aromatic Elixir, a beautiful product, very popular in its colorless form, as official in the U. S. P., but not generally known with its bright red color as official in the National Formulary.

Compound Elixir of Taraxacum was stressed particularly because of its high alcoholic content, which enables a physician to use it as a vehicle for salts which require a large amount of alcohol in order to obtain a solution. This was nicely brought out in the case of phenobarbital which can be dissolved directly in the elixir to the extent of $\frac{1}{4}$ grain to one teaspoonful, while a small additional amount of alcohol will carry $\frac{1}{2}$ grain to one teaspoonful. Naturally, the physician was quick to perceive that by writing a compound prescription in this manner, he is helping to overcome the growing tendency of his patient toward self-medication. This habit is so easily encouraged by single item prescriptions which are readily read by the patient, who not only calls for the article by name at the drug store, but who immediately passes the information on to his friends that "so and so" is great to make you sleep, etc., etc. The growing tendency on the part of the public to self-medication with hypnotics of this type was generally recognized and the health of a community is seriously endangered when products of this nature are used without the direct supervision of a physician.

Compound Elixir of Vanillin—one of the most acceptable vehicle elixirs available, with its golden color and delightful odor and taste—was again very popular.

Syrup of Cocoa, which is of particular value when insoluble salts are prescribed, as in the case of quinine; the heavy-bodied syrup acting as a splendid suspending medium for the quinine.

Syrup of Cinnamon was found to be almost specific in its masking qualities with sodium salicylate and valuable for use with chloral hydrate; its dark color also added materially to its value.

Syrup of Raspberry, a splendid vehicle, was by far the most popular item on display. Its value in masking the intense saltiness of such items as the bromides and chlorides is truly remarkable. The sample prescription which contained 10 grains of sodium bromide to one teaspoonful did not last long, as those who tried it were continually sending their friends back to the booth to try "that raspberry bromide prescription." Pharmacists, who have tried to persuade physicians to sample their prescriptions, know what a difficult task it usually is, and still they were asking for that opportunity here.

Another four-page folder was made up for this year's exhibit, very similar in style to the one presented to the physicians last year. It carried in printed form the general information shown by the display, together with a few additional notes of interest to the prescribing physician. A large number of last year's booklets was also given out to those who had not attended the meeting in Philadelphia.

From the many contacts made during the several days that the exhibit was open, the writer is more than ever impressed by the fact that the general run of pharmacists do not appreciate the real opportunity which lies before them in the matter of selling "professional pharmacy and service" to the physicians of their communities. The physicians are extremely desirous to receive this information and service, and would gladly cooperate with the pharmacist who shows the slightest interest in that mutual question, "the health and comfort of a community." May our pharmacists awaken to the full possibilities of this service and take advantage of them now, for there never was a better opportunity offered for those who would like to practice real pharmacy—the N. F. exhibits at the A. M. A. conventions have proven that.—ADLEY B. NICHOLS, *Secretary, Committee on National Formulary.*

THE PRESCRIPTION DEPARTMENT PHASE OF THE NATIONAL DRUG STORE SURVEY.

AT THE National Drug Store Survey Conference in St. Louis, on April 26th and 27th, all results of the Survey available at that time were presented. It was agreed by the approximately 800 delegates that the great mass of practical information gathered during the year's intensive work would be of little value, unless all divisions of the drug and pharmaceutical activities studied and applied it to their particular needs. Hence, definite steps were taken to organize plans for nationwide application of the information already obtained and to be obtained after further analysis of other material awaiting study.

The professional phase of the Survey has received careful attention and much important information is now available in the form of a printed report, released at the Conference, entitled "Prescription Department Sales Analysis in Selected Drug Stores" (Domestic Commerce Series No. 61). A study of this report will be found useful in the development of the prescription service.

In addition to the research carried on in the St. Louis pharmacies, the other investigations which have been made under the direction of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION on the determination of the use of U. S. P. and N. F. preparations and the surveys in various states on different phases of prescription practice and related activities will be stimulating and helpful to all divisions of pharmacy and the drug business, retail, wholesale and manufacturing.

Advantage is being taken of the opportunity to receive benefits from the Survey—The Superintendent of Documents in Washington, D. C., reports that all copies of the first printing were sold during the first month after the release of the report, and the second printing will be available shortly. It has been stated that several colleges of pharmacy are supplying students with copies for use in the respective courses of these schools. The sizes of orders from pharmacists vary in number; if all the retail druggists, the students in pharmacy, wholesalers and manufacturers could have copies and study the aims and purposes of the Survey, it is felt that the promotion of better conditions in the drug industry, which is the keynote of the National Drug Store Survey, would be well under way.

“Prescription Department Sales Analysis in Selected Drug Stores” is the first of a series of three reports on the professional phase of the Survey. The other two reports, which will be prepared and printed as soon as possible, will cover a study of two professional drug stores in St. Louis and one of operating costs and net profit in the 13 stores considered in the first report, respectively. A notice and review of the first report will be found in the last section of this number of the JOURNAL.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE COSTS OF MEDICAL CARE.

THE Committee on the Costs of Medical Care was organized in 1927, with Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, since appointed Secretary of the Interior by President Hoover, as chairman, “to study carefully all the economic aspects of the prevention and care of sickness, including the adequacy, availability and compensation of the persons and agencies concerned, and to recommend to the public and the professions various ways for improving the present situation.” The members of the Committee represent the professions directly concerned, various institutions and special interests, economists, sociologists and the public, and constitute a group to which we may confidently look for thorough investigation, careful study and sound advice. It is not a governmental organization and is not dominated by any private interest. Its declared purpose is to find the best procedures for all concerned in the important question of medical care in its broadest sense.

The Committee’s work was financed by a number of foundations interested in social progress; a five-year program of research was adopted in 1928; a research staff was secured; the work has been carried forward aggressively and the final report is expected to be released toward the end of this year. A number of studies dealing with various phases of medical care have been completed and printed.

Mr. Ambrose Hunsberger represents pharmacy on the committee and Dr. W. J. Schieffelin is a member representing the public. Dr. Robert P. Fischelis is a member of the research staff.

Such a comprehensive study as the committee has made has focused attention on the kind of medical care the public now receives and on the agencies that furnish it. Undoubtedly, some preconceived ideas have been or will be disproved and some information of an unexpected character will be developed. This should lead to sounder thought about medical care and a more intelligent approach toward making it available to all of the people at reasonable cost. It should link health with education as the basic requirements of a successful nation and demonstrate that the

well being of the people, and not self-interest, must be the first consideration of the professions licensed to render medical care. It is evident, too, that the public has no fixed preferences about the agency from which they receive the medical care they consider desirable.

Considerable attention has been given to pharmacy's services in medical care and to the cost of these services. Two members of the research staff, Dr. Rorem, an economist, and Dr. Fischelis, a pharmacist, were detailed to this study. They are to be commended, especially by pharmacists, for the broad view they took of pharmaceutical service and for the important place they have shown it to occupy in medical care. Pharmacy will profit by careful study, searching criticism and frank discussion of it, if honestly made and by informed persons. The results of this study have been published in book form and a review of it will be found in the "Book Review Section" of this issue of the *JOURNAL*.

Many students of pharmaceutical progress have felt that the profession and industry were drifting during recent years; that pharmacy had lost entity and purpose. This book should encourage them—that in spite of outward appearances, pharmacy is rendering a useful public health service and is apparently satisfying the people to a rather remarkable extent, which latter is no small accomplishment. Improvements are necessary, of course, and especially a recognition by those who follow it in any capacity, that pharmacy must take a more definite place in public health.

The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care will serve the public and the profession and industry, if it speaks out about what is expected of pharmacy in the new program and of the recognition that will be accorded it.—E. F. K.



National Formulary exhibit at the meeting of the American Medical Association in New Orleans, La., May 9-13, 1932.