

## A NOVEL PHARMACEUTICAL ORGANIZATION.\*

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Washed in the West by the turbulent Baltic Sea, bound in the East by Soviet Russia, the democratic Republic of Estonia is one of the most progressive small nations in Northern Europe. Though close to Red Russia, Marxian dialectics have been manfully resisted in Estonia, as have been socialism, fascism and other isms prevalent in the modern world (1). The economic structure of the country is based on sound capitalistic principles of private property and individualism in enterprise. Estonia is not a populous country. The number of its citizens does not exceed much over a million; yet it has won the favorable attention and respect of other nations for its rapid progress in many lines of human endeavor and advanced social legislature. It is not our business to examine any of those here. Our concern is with a novel pharmaceutical organization originated in Estonia, "The Estonian Chamber of Pharmacy."

Though the country is small, it can boast of six pharmaceutical associations, around which are gathered different elements within the profession (2). There is an association of drug-store proprietors, an association of employee pharmacists, an association of German speaking pharmacists, an association for scientific pharmacy, an association of assistant pharmacists and an academic pharmaceutical association. Instead of being under-organized as in America, pharmacy in Estonia for a number of years was over-organized into many, often contentious, factions. In such a situation no association was qualified to speak for pharmacy as a whole. Paradoxically, in a number of cases the opposition to attempted pharmacy legislature came from rival pharmaceutical organizations. The first attempt to form a united pharmaceutical front was made by a call to associations to unite into a national federation of pharmaceutical associations. This, however, was doomed to failure, since only three organizations joined the federation; the others preferred to stay out. In this somewhat crucial situation, the leading members of the profession, notably Messrs. Wallner, Lill and Dr. Rahesoo, as early as 1931, conceived the necessity of creating a national pharmaceutical super-organization that would be above factional politics, and would be a true representative body of all pharmacists in the country. These gentlemen accordingly evolved the idea of "The Chamber of Pharmacy." Finding that the idea of "The Chamber" was generally favored by the profession, they went ahead and worked out definite rules and by-laws governing this organization, submitted them to proper government authorities, and asked for the charter. At first there was a reluctance on the part of the government to the creation of an organization of this type, and no action on it was forthcoming for a number of years. Finally, in the Fall of 1934, the President of the Republic expressed his approval of The Chamber, and the charter was issued accordingly. "The Estonian Chamber of Pharmacy" began its functions January 1, 1935.

By its charter The Chamber of Pharmacy has many earmarks of a public corporation as related to pharmacy, with definite powers, rights, duties and obligations. It is an instrumentality to increase the efficiency of pharmacy administration, to supply the various wants of pharmacists, and to promote the public health and the

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general welfare of the profession. Within this sphere The Chamber has certain legislative, executive and judicial functions; has right to impose levies on its members and punish them. On the other hand it owes its constituents protection and help, legal and economical. For this, every member of The Chamber owes it undisputed obedience and fealty. "One for all; all for one" is the corner-stone of this organization.

Every registered pharmacist, if he desires to practice, must be a member of The Chamber and pay his dues promptly. This does not apply to pharmacists in government service, to whom, during the tenure of their office, the membership is closed for reasons of public policy.

The Chamber maintains itself by levies from various sources, of which the most important are membership fees, fines imposed by The Disciplinary Court of The Chamber, and a levy on prescriptions (one cent on every prescription filled).

The Chamber functions through its legislative, executive and judicial set-up. The legislative power and the appointment of commissions and committees is in the hands of *The Council of The Chamber*. It consists of 20 members elected for 4 years. Executive functions fall on the shoulders of *The Board of Directors*, composed of the President, Vice-President and Secretary. The tasks of The Board are of administrative nature, such as enacting the decisions and rules of The Council, collecting membership dues and other levies, representing The Chamber in courts of law and government bureaus, maintaining an employment agency for pharmacists, etc. The judicial power is vested in *The Disciplinary Court* of five members. This court has jurisdiction over practicing pharmacists, and acts in breaches of professional ethics and in cases of improper conduct outside of professional duties. The Court has four remedies at its disposal: Warning, reprimand, fine not over 300 kronen (about \$80.00), and the suspension of the license for not over a year.

As to avowed purposes of The Chamber of Pharmacy, Mr. K. Jürison, the president of The Board (3), lists the following: (1) to promote the lawful practice of pharmacy in the country; (2) to stand up for the rights of pharmacists and to protect the interests of the whole profession; (3) to represent pharmacy in government bureaus and other administrative agencies; (4) to promote domestic drug manufacture and collecting of crude drugs; (5) to keep a register of pharmacists and their business enterprises; (6) to maintain a welfare department for the benefit of pharmacists, their families and help, who may need assistance whether due to old age, sickness or loss of capacity for work; (7) to elect from among its members pharmacists for public service, as occasions may arise; (8) to issue certificates and other information to members, who require them; (9) to collect and publish statistics relating to pharmacy; (10) to clarify misunderstandings between the members and maintain high professional code of ethics.

R. Wallner (4) summarized the above as follows: "What is the purpose of The Chamber? To serve as an intermediary between the government and the profession of pharmacy. Any proposed legislature relating to pharmacy, be it national or local, is sent to The Chamber for comments and approval. Likewise the board of directors of The Chamber may sponsor new laws which the profession wishes to be passed by The Parliament. The Chamber protects the interests of pharmacists. It supervises that the members of the profession abide by laws and observe the code of

ethics. The Chamber has a disciplinary court, where are discussed offences against law and ethics, and punishments meted out. The punishments of The Chamber, however, have to be approved by The Administration of Public Health and Welfare. With the aid of The Chamber the pharmacists in this country desire to establish an independent pharmacy administration, reduce the excessive taxes imposed on drug stores, and generally raise the ethics of the profession."

Even though The Chamber performs certain functions of administrative nature, it is not an organ of the government, nor does it encroach upon the authority of The Department of Pharmacy in The Public Health Administration. It is a chartered corporate body for mutual protection, benefit and discipline. It complements the government only where the latter leaves off. Neither does The Chamber displace the existing associations, though many of the former assumptions of associations are of necessity curbed. Says President Jürison (3): "By establishing The Chamber of Pharmacy, there was created a definite representative body for the profession of pharmacy in the country, in which all the colleagues are obliged to take part and coöperate. Not only that; every pharmacist is responsible to The Disciplinary Court for his words and deeds. . . (5). The Chamber must develop in its members love and the sense of responsibility for their work and calling. . . It must stretch out its helping hand to those colleagues, for whom the struggle for existence makes difficult to preserve the professional integrity. . ."

#### REFERENCES.

- (1) Thompson, Ralph, "Estonia Rejects Dictatorship," *Current History*, April 1936.
- (2) Wallner, R., "Ueber Erstrebtes und Erreichtes in der Pharmazie Estlands," *Pharmazeutische Presse*, 30, 1935.
- (3) Jürison, K., "Pharmazeutenkammer in Estland." A speech at The First Convention of Estonian-Finnish-Hungarian Pharmaceutical Association, Helsingfors, Finland, September 21, 1935.
- (4) Wallner, R., A personal communication to the author, September 22, 1935.
- (5) Jürison, K., Speech at the Opening of The Chamber of Pharmacy, Tallinn, May 26, 1935. *Pharmacia* XV, No. 6, 1935.

#### "OIL FOR THE WHEELS OF PHARMACY."

• An article by R. L. Swain appears in the March issue of the *Medical Economics* which it would be well for both physicians and pharmacists to read. In closing, he admonishes:

"Never criticise the pharmacist in the presence of the patient. First of all, it is usually unfair, unjustified and uncalled for. While it may do the pharmacist harm, it may do the physician equal harm. It so happens that the patient is often as friendly with the pharmacist as with the physician. The physician should be just as considerate of the reputation of the pharmacist as he is of his own." He concludes:

"My final plea is that medicine and pharmacy seek to function as colleagues striving for a common goal. That each diligently cultivate that spirit of accord, that spirit of mutual understanding and obligation, that spirit of purposeful coöperation which their respective abilities and capabilities certainly suggest as sound, sensible and wholly desirable."

#### GERMAN APOTHECARIES DAY.

Apothecary Day will be celebrated in Germany during the end of June 1937. This celebration will be especially featured in Essen. A large celebration is planned and among the questions that will be studied are those relating to the new Legislation.

#### PHARMACY DRAMATIZED.

Drugs and the part they play in pharmacy are dramatized in an exhibit at the Clinton branch of the Newark Museum. Medicinal plants, as well as modern pharmaceutical equipment, are described in the exhibit.