

EDITORIAL

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The Editor is appreciative of the kindness and sympathy expressed by members and friends during his stay at the hospital because of recent illness and following a surgical operation. These evidences of friendship greatly lightened the affliction.

It was also necessary to call on the secretary and other co-workers, which meant the time of added service on their part in getting out the JOURNAL.

To all of them the editor extends thanks, but his words are feeble compared with the encouragement given. He, therefore, can only hope that the acknowledgment will speak in a small way for the feeling of his response.

PROBLEMS OF THE PHARMACOPŒIA.

AT THE Dallas meeting of the ASSOCIATION, Chairman E. Fullerton Cook, of the U. S. P. Committee of Revision, in making the customary annual report, A. PH. A. JOUR., page 900 (Oct. 1936), submitted several suggestions to perfect the organization and work of the U. S. P. Convention and the Committee of Revision, and expressed the hope that those interested in the Pharmacopœia would have an opportunity to consider and express themselves before the 1940 Convention, about these plans for improving its professional status.

The Pharmacopœia, as a professional and legal standard, must keep pace with scientific progress, and in order to do so, fundamental changes in procedure and in personnel are increasingly necessary. Interim revision by supplements and other changes in procedure were approved at the 1930 Convention and suggestions for further improvement will be submitted later. Chairman Cook's present suggestions were directed toward improvements in the selection of the personnel which will carry on the work of Pharmacopœial revision because success depends in great measure upon the ability and reliability of those selected.

The Committee on U. S. Pharmacopœia of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION desires, in addition to its other activities, to coöperate by gathering opinions of Chairman Cook's suggestions from A. PH. A. members and others directly interested. The Committee has partly rearranged the suggestions and presents below a brief discussion of the six problems submitted, each of which merits a definite expression of opinion.

May we ask that you aid the committee by studying each problem carefully, expressing your approval or disapproval on the enclosed reply-card, and mailing it promptly? If you desire to present your opinions at greater length, please do so and send your letter to the address on the reply-card. The Committee plans to present a summary of the replies received as soon as sufficient returns are in and to submit other problems during 1938 and 1939, with the object of obtaining the pharmaceutical viewpoint with respect to Pharmacopœial revision for presentation in 1940 or earlier. Should you have other questions upon which you think the ASSOCIATION should express itself, these, too, will be gratefully received by the Committee. (See pages xv and xvi for reply-card which can be cut out and mailed.)

DISCUSSION OF POLICIES AND QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. DELEGATES TO THE CONVENTION.

The appointment of delegates to the Pharmacopœial Convention is a matter of specific interest to the College or Association making the appointment. Considerable criticism has been voiced in the past to the effect that certain Colleges and Associations have appointed delegates having no direct affiliations with the appointing institutions, or have presented other groups with credentials signed in blank. Whatever may have been the effect of such appointments is not definitely known, but it certainly seems desirable that every delegate who is accepted for membership in the Decennial Convention should be able to show that he or she is qualified to speak for the College or Association which is represented.

(1) Do you favor that the Committee on Credentials include in its instructions to the Colleges and Associations a statement to the effect "that no delegate be considered eligible to a seat in the Convention who has not been definitely chosen by the group or college he or she is appointed to represent?"

2. VOTING IN THE CONVENTION.

Chapter VIII of the By-Laws of the Pharmacopœial Convention permits each accredited delegate one vote on every question before the Convention. Associations or Colleges in nearby territory are able to send a delegation of three each at little cost and are thus able to outvote organizations from distant points who find it difficult to secure full delegation because of great sacrifice of time and the heavy cost of transportation. It would seem desirable, at least in a spirit of fairness, that each delegation should confer and then cast but one vote.

(2) Do you favor the recommendation that Chapter VIII of the By-Laws of the Pharmacopœial Convention be changed to allow each member-organization one vote on every question regardless of the attendance of one, two or three delegates?

3. THE TIME FOR THE A. PH. A. CONVENTION IN THE DECENNIAL YEAR.

For many years it has been the custom of the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION to hold its annual convention, during the U. S. P. convention year, in Washington or in a nearby city. The time selected has been the week preceding that in which the Pharmacopœial Convention is held. The object of such action is to save both time and expense of delegates who would thus make but one trip instead of two during the year. This object seems worthy enough and there is no reason for its discontinuance. There has, however, been a certain amount of unsavory criticism to the effect that the A. PH. A. meeting has been the scene of the organization of politically inspired cartels whose action might effect the high standard of scientific and professional procedure which should dominate the U. S. P. Convention. In order to avoid even the suggestion that the A. PH. A. Convention be thus taken advantage of, it has been suggested that the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION hold its convention the week after the U. S. P. Convention.

On the other hand it has also been suggested that it is at the A. PH. A. Convention in the decennial year where the pharmacopœial problems of the decennium are brought together and carefully considered. Any political activities at this meeting will thus be obvious and preparation to frustrate them can be made. Postponing the A. PH. A. Convention would not prevent political organizations from

holding meetings of their own and springing their propositions as surprises at the Pharmacopœial Convention. Question No. 3 is, therefore, worthy of your careful consideration.

(3) Do you favor requesting the AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION to hold its annual meeting in the Pharmacopœial Convention year, after the Convention rather than before the Convention?

4. ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE U. S. P. REVISION COMMITTEE.

The first consideration in pharmacopœial work is the assurance of a Revision Committee personnel, individually qualified and willing to carry their share of the task of revision, which has now become so enormous. It is also essential that the persons selected should be so situated as to be able to carry out the work. It has been previously ruled and is generally accepted that a person to be eligible for membership on the Committee of Revision must have been an accredited delegate present at the current convention. Such a ruling may deprive the Pharmacopœia of the services of the individual who might measure up to the highest standard of scientific accomplishment and who might be qualified, willing and able to serve it to great advantage, if that individual:

- (a) is financially, or for other reasons, unable to attend the convention, or
- (b) is a member of a large association or a faculty member of a college, where the three delegates are selected by priority of age, time of service or for political or personal reasons.

For obvious reasons it would seem unwise to do away with this ruling entirely, yet it seems advisable that some sort of a plan should be adopted by which specially qualified individuals could serve on the Committee of Revision even though they have not been present at the convention.

(4) Do you favor the present ruling being changed to the effect that persons to be eligible to membership on the Committee of Revision must be accredited delegates present at the current convention, except that in certain cases, individuals specially qualified to serve because of the exceptional service they can render and are willing and able to give, may be elected to membership on the Committee without having been accredited delegates provided such individuals are elected to the Committee by an eighty per cent vote of the Convention, or, in filling a vacancy during the decennial period, by a vote of at least eighty per cent of the members of the Committee of Revision?

5. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE U. S. P. COMMITTEE OF REVISION.

The U. S. P. standards and methods of testing an assay must pass to-day, acceptably, the most exacting demands of scientific workers both in this country and abroad. As was mentioned in Item 4, it is becoming of increasing importance that the personnel of the Revision Committee must consist of members who are individually *qualified* and *willing* to carry their share of the enormous task of continuous revision. Under the present "set-up," the Convention has no means of knowing either the qualifications or the willingness of an individual to participate in pharmacopœial revision. It seems to be without question that such information should be available to the convention and should be the principal qualification justifying the election of an individual to the Committee of Revision.

(5) Do you favor the issuing of questionnaire blanks to be filed for each person placed in nomination for the Committee of Revision, the blanks to carry information on professional and academic accomplishments; the blanks then to be distributed in the convention before the votes are called?

6. CLOSING OF DELEGATION LISTS.

(6) Do you favor the closing of the delegation lists at least thirty days before the convention so that the Credentials Committee may have sufficient time to check the certificates?

May we ask again that you consider the questions carefully and mail the reply-card on pages xv and xvi, in Advertising Section, promptly, thus aiding the Committee in its work?

A. PH. A. Committee on U. S.
Pharmacopœia

HARRY E. BISCHOFF
CLIFFORD C. GLOVER
WILLIAM J. HUSA
LYMAN F. KEBLER
H. EVERT KENDIG
ARTHUR P. MARKENDORF
ARTHUR F. SCHLICHTING
FRANK O. TAYLOR
ARNO VIEHOEVER
ELMER H. WIRTH, *Chairman.*

GOING BACK TO THE FOUNDING OF THE A. PH. A.

"According to the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Pharmacist* of October eleventh, each week a list is published by the United States authorities of products offered for importation at American ports which were 'detained' because they were found on inspection to be adulterated or misbranded. The lists of the goods detained in the first fortnight of November include, among others, the following drugs: Aloes, cassia oil, coriander seed, nutmeg, fennel seed, honey, Irish moss, jalap root, poppy seed and titles which were refused entry were large; thus there were some 150 cases of aloes, 600 bags of coriander seed, 50 bags of jalap root, and thirteen bales of stramonium leaves. In the official lists the reasons for detention are stated concisely; the coriander seed, the fennel seed and the poppy seed were 'filthy;' the nutmegs were moldy; the cassia oil contained resin and heavy metals; the aloes in some cases contained excessive moisture, and in other cases the total ash was too large; the jalap was deficient in resins, and the stramonium leaves were deficient in alkaloids. In addition to the simple products which were detained during the fortnight, substantial quantities of 'medicinal preparations' were refused entry at the ports because the labels on them made 'false therapeutic claims' or 'other misleading statements.' This inspection of goods offered for import at United States ports is a custom of long standing. In his book, 'A History of Pharmacy,' James Grier recalls that so far back as the middle of last century it was found that the drugs imported into America from Great Britain were 'so infamously adulterated' that in self defense the American authorities were driven to appoint inspectors and examiners at the places of import, 'and the quantities of damaged and adulterated drugs rejected by them were enormous.' This system of inspection has been carried on ever since then, and the quantities rejected are still 'enormous,' but their origin is not Great Britain, although the discarded imports may in some cases be re-exported from this country in the original packages, the condition of the contents of which are unknown to those who effect the transshipment. The important question is 'where do these goods to which the United States authorities forbid entry find a market eventually?' Who buys the filthy, moldy and adulterated drugs? India in the past has been one of the dumping grounds for rubbish; but fortunately that destination will soon be crossed off the list of receivers of such things, for, as was recently reported in *The Journal*, a bill is before the Indian Legislative Assembly, which aims at stopping the importation of adulterated drugs. Where does the inferior merchandise go? There is no law to prevent its entry at United Kingdom ports. Is it not time His Majesty's Government followed the example set by the United States more than eighty years ago?"