

# EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, EDITOR EMERITUS.

2215 Constitution Ave., WASHINGTON, D. C.

## THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROFESSIONS.

THE FOLLOWING quotations are taken from an address given to a Rotary Vocational Group of London doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and opticians on December 1, 1938, by Secretary H. N. Linstead of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

"There are two classes of legislation affecting the interrelationship of doctors, dentists, chemists, opticians and others engaged in the health services—the legislation that deals with public health matters and that dealing with the organization of each of the professions.

The public health legislation of Great Britain reflects the two parallel but separate roads along which progress in health matters take place. . . . Nevertheless, the trend of events is reasonably clear, though the speed may be reduced. It is in the direction of an increased nationalization of all the public health services through the local authorities and under the general control of the Ministry of Health and the Scottish Department of Health.

Generally speaking, Parliament is prepared to give to an organized profession performing some substantial public service a statutory register and protection from those who falsely represent themselves to be registered. In this way doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons, solicitors, architects and possibly others have their professional titles protected. In some few cases Parliament has provided a profession with protection against certain practices by unregistered persons. . . . It is, however, important to note that in many ways the need for restrictive legislation is likely to grow less, even in the eyes of the professions. To-day, under the National Health Insurance Act, medical treatment is reserved to the duly qualified medical practitioner, dentistry to the dentist, the supply of medicines to the pharmacist, and in practice, the testing of sight and the supply of glasses is in the hands of certain registered persons. With the extension of the Insurance Act to the dependents of insured persons, there will be automatically an assurance that three-quarters of the population of Great Britain will be receiving the benefits of these health services at the hands of qualified practitioners. Nevertheless, the anomalies between the statutory provisions applicable to the various professions concerned with the public health are quite irreconcilable. . . .

Where the incidence of legislation is so capricious, there is room for regularization, and to secure this the various professions have a community of interest. Unfortunately, it is the points of different rather than of common interest which attract attention. But it is neither in the interests of the public health nor of the professions themselves that each should work behind its own frontier, with the minimum of intercourse with its neighbors. It is attractive to visualize a coördination of the professions engaged in public health work. . . .

More can and should be done by the professional organizations themselves to discuss and solve the problems which affect two or more professions. Without Government participation there can be no compulsion, but there is much that can be done by other means. There is enough ground to be covered to justify the set-

ting up of the professions concerned. It is less important to suggest the precise form of the machinery than to outline what it might do. The professions can join together in measures directed against unfair competition by the unqualified. They can support legislation designed to safeguard professional titles and professional practice. . . .

Discussion alone cannot achieve everything, but it should be possible to lay down principles for the guidance of those anxious to conform to a high standard of professional conduct and in other ways to build up public opinion within the professions. Such a consultative body would demand from its participants a willingness to contribute freely for the general benefit. Professions which are fortunately placed would need to lend a hand to those less fortunate for the sake of their common interests. . . .

In all this question of closer relationship between our professions we must remember the man in the street, whose servants we are. It is only so far as we aim to promote his welfare, whether by legislation or consultation, that we build on firm professional foundations."

These quotations indicate that the basic problems of the British Pharmacists are similar to our own and are integrated with the problems of the other public health professions. They also indicate that the leaders of the professions are giving serious consideration to some form of definite inter-professional coöperation in dealing with these problems and others that may arise.—E. F. K.

#### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

##### (N<sub>2</sub>) REPORT OF SUB-SECTION ON PHARMACY.

The Section devoted its entire meeting, Tuesday forenoon, December 27, 1938, in Richmond, to the Symposium on Glycols: their chemistry, pharmacology, industrial applications and pharmaceutical uses. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Dr. F. C. Whitmore was unable to be present to discuss his phase of the subject, namely, "The Chemistry of the Glycols."

Dr. H. O. Calvery gave the results of his most comprehensive toxicity tests on these compounds (propylene glycol, diethylene glycol, ethylene glycol, carbitol, dioxide and cellosolve) in which he used some 2600 animals. He stressed and demonstrated the need of applying statistical methods to the results of toxicity studies. In his summary he concluded that with the exception of propylene glycol the others should be avoided in food and drug preparations.

Mr. H. B. McClure told of the industrial applications of the glycols in a most interesting manner. Among the uses cited were: as engine coolants, low freeze dynamites, electrolytic condensers, plasticizers and in textile manufacture.

The pharmaceutical uses of the glycols were discussed by Dr. A. G. DuMez, who gave an extensive review of the literature on this subject. In the discussion, participated in by H. B. Haag and M. G. Mulinos, the desirability of comparing the toxicity of these compounds with some generally known solvent was indicated, as well as the need for studying the factors (age, sex, their chemicals, etc.) which might influence the intensity of the glycol action.

The attendance was very good, and striking in that it stuck, there being little or no moving about during the symposium. This was the first time that an attempt had been made to gather together in a comprehensive fashion all that is known about the glycols, and it is hoped that the papers will be published together so as to give a complete picture.

W. F. RUDD, *Chairman.*

Reported by H. B. Haag.