PROGRESS MADE BY THE BUREAU OF CHEMISTRY IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT IN ITS RELATION TO PHARMACY.*

BY C. L. ALSBERG, M.D.[1]

The drug work at the Bureau falls under three groups:

1st. The enforcement of the Sherley Amendment, under the supervision of a surgeon of the Public Health Service.

2nd. The control of pharmaceuticals.

3rd. The control of crude drugs.

The methods employed for the control of crude drugs have changed materially during the past few years and the change has brought forth both praise and criticism. The work was formerly limited to the ports of entry and especially to New York, where it was under the supervision of Dr. Rusby. Little control was exercised from Washington. Dr. Rusby's work was admirable, but he could not do it all, and it was necessary to have in Washington, a corps of men, to coördinate the port work, and to act as advisors to the administrators of the law. The corps has been assembled gradually, and as the men have become proficient they have been sent to the field and port laboratories, and it is hoped that eventually every field laboratory will have a pharmacognocist.

Since the beginning of the war, conditions regarding imported drugs have been peculiar. After the middle of the first month of the war, no imported drugs were received. Then a month later conditions changed and drugs began to arrive from all over the world in large and small lots, and more work has been entailed in examining these products since the war started than before. The importers have had to adjust their business methods and establish connections with the dealers in Calcutta, Straits Settlements, Guiana and other remote points, instead of trading with middlemen in Antwerp, Amsterdam, England and Hamburg, as heretofore. The trade conditions have caused much confusion in the drug market. Importers are often obliged to accept goods with sight draft attached to bill of lading and when the goods arrive they may not be admitted because of inferiority or substitution. One importer went to great expense to bring in a shipment of Digitalis from Spain and when it arrived it was not U. S. P. Digitalis but *D. thapsi*, the action of which, therapeutically, is not known. *Aconitum fischeri* (Japanese aconite) has been offered for *A. napellus*, and this was allowed entry after labeling "Japanese Aconite, not recognized in U. S. P." Ipecac was substituted by *Ipecacuanha fibrosa*, an Inonidium species, and *Heteropteris pauciflora;* Stramonium by *xanthium strumarium* (cocklebur); Arnica by *Inula Britannica;* Senna partly by *Tephrosia appolinea;* Scammony by *Ipomoea orizabensis;* Buchu by *Barosma crenulata var. latifolia, B. pulchellum* and *Empleurum serrulatum.* Belladonna has been adulterated with *Solanum nigrum*, much low-grade belladonna has been offered for entry, but has been allowed to come in for the manufacture of alkaloid and

* Abstract of an address delivered before the Washington Branch of the American Pharmaceutical Association, April 5, 1917.

[1] Chief, Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

preparations capable of adjustments to a prescribed standard. *Hyoscyamus muticus* (Egyptian henbane) has been permitted entry for the manufacture of hyoscyamine. Marjoram has been adulterated with *Coriaria myrtifolia*, a poisonous plant.

The activities of the Bureau are being extended to the control of crude drugs produced in the United States and to providing standards for those not recognized by the Pharmacopoeia or National Formulary. Standards are being determined for Aspidium, Pennyroyal, Unicorn root and many other drugs used extensively in medical practice. The Viburnums have been studied. The description of *V. opulus* in the 8th edition fits *Acer spicatum* and does not apply to the true *V. opulus* and in consequence practically all *V. opulus* on the market formerly was *Acer spicatum* and many standard Viburnum preparations contained none of the true drug.

The situation regarding mustard is very acute at the present time. Russian and German mustards are out of the market and Great Britain has recently placed an embargo on English mustard. Consequently many new types of Brassica are offered for entry, some of which are pungent and others not, and the Department has to be continually on the alert to prevent the flooding of the market with spurious and worthless mustard seed.

PHARMACEUTICALS OF THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPOEIA.*

BY J. LEON LASCOFF.

Nearly seven years have elapsed since the United States Pharmacopoeial Convention assembled in Washington on May 10, 1910, to revise the pharmacists' book of standards. Thirty-eight states were represented, as well as the Governmental services and National Medical and Pharmaceutical organizations. One year ago the Pharmacopoeia was completed for issue; six months later it was ready for distribution; and on January 1 it became official.

It has been very gratifying to me to be chosen to prepare a paper on the pharmaceuticals of the new Pharmacopoeia, to embody the criticisms of the practical pharmacist, and to present them for discussion.

The average pharmacist is very likely to accept the new Pharmacopoeia in a perfectly matter-of-course manner. To the one who has been behind the scenes, and is conversant with the process of revision, however, the vast amount of work done, the responsibilities entailed, the sacrifice of time, and the energy devoted, without thought of remuneration, the work of revision appears of monumental proportions and calls for praise and admiration of the "men behind the guns," the men who did the work and the chairmen of the various sub-committees.

In New York the Board of Pharmacy has thought it necessary to compel pharmacists to obtain and keep in their possession copies of both the Pharmacopoeia and the National Formulary. In other states, however, such compulsion does not exist. The pharmacist may or may not own these valuable books, as their fancy may direct. And yet to me it seems that these should be not only on the

* Read before New York Branch, A. Ph. A., April 9, 1917.