

National Cabinet. Even so, if the pharmaceutical federation is to succeed, it must have service features that can be used by all diversified branches of American Pharmacy. As mentioned above, it is in this direction that the Dohme plan is peculiarly attractive.

That is as far as the writer cares to go in expressing, for the present, his views of the proposed federation. He desires to hear the views of others, notably of those who have had active connection with other national pharmaceutical bodies, which must be included in the federation if it is to be a real success. He stands ready to explain, to the best of his ability, details of the several plans of federation that have been thus far proposed. And above all, he urges this Association to see that it is represented by its strongest members at the meeting of the House of Delegates of the A. Ph. A. in Chicago when the federation idea is to be discussed from all angles.

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### THE ACID TEST.\*

BY J. W. STURMER.

In these trying days the motives of men, their aims, their capabilities—and their weaknesses as well—are more apparent than was the case when times and conditions were normal. For the conditions under which we now live, and work, subject us all to the severest tests. American pharmacists have never been tested as they are being tested at this time of stress. If they stand the test, the future of pharmacy will be assured. And so far they have shown up splendidly.

But there are false prophets and bad advisers. These like the poor, are with us always. Certain influences are at work to repeal or emasculate our pharmacy laws. And the argument, forsooth, is that we must adjust ourselves to war conditions. So we must, indeed. But were pharmacy laws passed for the pecuniary benefit of pharmacists, or were they passed for the protection of the public? Are the barriers to be raised or lowered in accordance with the supply of clerks—without reference to other considerations? If so, these laws are to be considered as class legislation, and would be un-American and in fact unconstitutional. If these laws were enacted for the public good—and we at least know full well that such was indeed the case—then the question is pertinent, do war conditions confer upon any man, or any group of men, license to ignore the dictates of public policy? Is human life less sacred because we are engaged in war? Now that our boys are fighting on foreign soil, are we, who have been intrusted to hold the last line of defense, to be less alert in the protection of the families of these boys in the first line trenches, just because we are becoming inured to a long casualty list? The answer may be deduced from the fact that our governments—national, state and municipal—are putting forth greater efforts than ever before in controlling epidemics, in reclaiming the physically unfit, in reducing infant mortality, in safeguarding the laborer at his work, in conserving our food and our fuel. Life must be risked in battle. For that very reason, it must be conserved at home. Under these circumstances, the duties and the obligations of pharmacists are clear, and the agitators who at this time, endeavor to weaken our pharmacy laws, will find no supporters within the ranks of the real pharmacists. It is to the lasting credit of pharmacists and pharmaceutical associations that they lead the fight for

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\* Read before Pennsylvania Pharmaceutical Association, 1918 meeting.

pharmacy laws, and welcome the regulations indicated by public policy. These self-same pharmacists and pharmaceutical associations will deem it their patriotic duty to maintain these regulations at any cost, and against all assailants.

To be sure, some kind of readjustment is imperative. Pharmacists are but human. They can work only so many hours. They, like other workers, need rest, out-of-door recreation, and some diversions. They should have them. They will work the better because of them. But is it not possible, in the larger stores and even in the medium-sized stores, to "departmentalize" and to conserve the professionally trained for the sale and compounding of medicines, using mere salesmen and saleswomen in the package goods departments and for the side lines? Indeed, I would say that such a plan has been in operation in many city stores and has not only proven its feasibility, but has been most profitable. Then, women should be encouraged to take up pharmacy, for which their fitness has been conclusively demonstrated. This, of course, is not so much for the relief of the present emergency as to provide for the future, as these women must be trained in a systematic and thorough manner.

And as for the pharmacist in the one-man store, he also needs his hours of recuperation. To obtain them, he can close at specified hours. But it would seem that public interest should be considered in this, and that, in place of closing all the stores of any given locality at the same time, there should be a system of rotation, so that some trained pharmacist may at all times be available.

In conclusion, permit me to point out that the condition created by the enlistment of thousands of physicians, has augmented the purely medical duties of those physicians who have remained behind to serve the civilian population—and this to such an extent, that many who in the past dispensed their own medicines, now find it practically impossible to continue such practice. This is, therefore, the great opportunity for pharmacy. It has been said, and justly so, that the medical man in the army should be relieved of all non-professional duties, and it has been proposed that the pharmacist should assume those duties. To bring this about, certain officers in high command must be converted, or legislative enactment must be had.

But in civil life, no such obstacles are in the way, and prescription writing may reasonably be expected to increase, as a result of the dearth of civilian physicians, and the added duties devolving upon each, along the lines of purely medical service. And if pharmacists in civil life succeed in reclaiming the position they once held, the pharmacists in the army will find their chances for recognition improved correspondingly. Is this, then, the time to lower the bars, and to let in incompetents? The war has developed a keener realization of the duties of citizenship. Every good citizen must render service. So must every profession. And to pharmacy comes, with the opportunity for service, the greatest opportunity for professional advancement which has presented itself within the memory of men now active. Under these war conditions, pharmacy cannot remain stationary; it must either rise or decline. The crisis is here. Hence I say that pharmacy is now being subjected to the acid test. We shall soon know its "metal." And I for one feel assured that it will prove to be royal metal—that pharmacy will meet the test.

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