

## EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, Editor

253 Bourse Bldg., PHILADELPHIA

### PROHIBITION LEGISLATION AND THE DRUG BUSINESS.

**I**N nearly all States legislative bills relating to the sale of alcoholic preparations are pending. Quite a number of the proposed measures, and some that have already been enacted into laws, have a direct bearing on the drug business. The fact that those engaged in the business to be regulated are law-abiding citizens and desirous of legislation which will promote better citizenship is not infrequently ignored by legislators. Intentionally, or otherwise, legislators do not discuss proposed legislation with those affected by it, and in many instances the latter are not informed relative to the text of bills until they appear in print. Even though these bills are killed they take the time of the legislature and involve expenditures on the part of the State and interested citizens. There is now more need than ever for an advisory body, composed of representative business and professional men, to whom proposed legislation should be referred for careful study. If the regulation is necessary, then the bill should be carefully prepared by such commission for final action by the legislators.

The following bill has found place on the calendar of the Idaho Legislature:

“It shall be unlawful for any pharmacist, druggist, apothecary, merchant, trader, peddler, or any other person, male or female, in this state with or without license to sell by wholesale or retail, or to give away, directly or indirectly, or to have in his or her possession any patent medicine or other medicine compound or mixture which contains in excess of 2 percent of alcohol.”

Violation is made a felony, subject to penitentiary imprisonment of not less than one year nor more than two.

A California bill provides for the use of ethyl alcohol in the manufacture of non-drinkable preparations, but no provision is made therein for the sale of preparations containing alcohol.

The measure which has been approved by the House Judiciary Committee, defining “beer, wine or other intoxicating malt or vinous liquors” as any liquor which contains more than one-half of one percent of alcohol, applies to the war prohibition act which becomes effective July 1st, and is not subject to controversy with State law save as the constitutionality of the original act shall be attacked successfully.

The state laws differ on the alcoholic content in their prohibition laws. West Virginia draws the line below one-half of one percent alcohol content; in Alabama, South Dakota and Maryland any beverage containing alcohol is declared intoxi-

ating; Michigan bars liquors "of intoxicating properties;" the North Carolina law specifies liquors that "will produce intoxication," leaving the decision of such condition to court; the Texas law practically conforms to the latter, while in Maine the basis of alcohol content is "not over three percent." The "dry" leaders contend that the States have no right under the prohibition amendment to attempt to define an intoxicating liquor, while the opposition holds that each State can give its own definition of an intoxicating drink.

We are concerned in the exemption clause pertaining to the sale of alcohol-containing preparations. The wording of this clause should be uniform, and to that end Chairman George W. Lattimer, of the N. W. D. A. Committee on Legislation, suggests that of the Arizona law, which reads:

"Provided, also, that nothing herein shall prevent the manufacture and sale of such preparations as flavoring extracts, essences, tinctures, perfumes or remedies containing drugs or medicines which do not contain more alcohol than is necessary for legitimate purposes of extraction, solution or preservation, and which contain drugs in sufficient quantity to medicate such compounds, and which are sold for legitimate and lawful purposes, and not as beverages."

E. G. E.

#### THE SEPARATION OF DISPENSING FROM PRESCRIBING.

**T**HE dispensing and prescribing of medicines are different and not interchangeable functions. True it is that many physicians prescribe and dispense, and while under certain conditions this may be allowable and necessary, as a general practice it should not be permitted, for reasons that have been frequently presented. The question has often been discussed in connection with the dispensing of narcotics, and now that regulations are being perfected for controlling the sale of medicines employed in the treatment of venereal diseases it is again a topic for discussions.

When the Venereal Disease Act was before the British Parliament the British Pharmaceutical Society sought to have the officinal dispensing of venereal remedies on physicians' prescriptions reserved exclusively to pharmacists, but the medical profession, as represented by the British Medical Association, refused to give up this part of its dispensing practice. The attitude of doctors in this country is not so different. The contention is, and rightly, that pharmacists should advance their educational standards, but how much pharmacy is taught in medical schools? While medical men may not be willing to admit that it is just as wrong for the members of their profession to dispense medicines as for pharmacists to prescribe, they can not reasonably contend that they, without special training and education in pharmacy, are qualified for pharmaceutical work.

The progress of medicine is in a degree dependent upon that of pharmacy, and every encouragement should be given to advance it; there should be hearty and sincere coöperation between the two professions. The right of pharmacists to dispense should be as firmly established as that of doctors to prescribe.

In the latter connection we desire again to refer to the discontinuance of sales by druggists of remedies for venereal diseases. This is right and proper, but the prescribing of such medicines is equal in importance to the prescribing of narcotics. It is true that physicians as a class are honorable men, and the same is true of pharmacists. That the medical profession is not free from charlatans will be admitted, and those who doubt this will be convinced by reading the report of Francis W. Shepardson, Director of Registration and Education for Illinois, on the status of the medical profession in that State, recently printed in the *Journal of the A. M. A.* Under the existing conditions it will be evident that there are opportunities for imposition and that there are those who will take full advantage of them.

It seems to us that the medical men, as represented by the Medical Associations, should not only favor the discontinuance of dispensing by physicians but seek in every possible way to effect a separation of dispensing and prescribing as distinct and not interchangeable functions. It will help the advancement of both professions and thereby benefit the public.

There should be morale in professions and among professions. A recent definition given for the word "morale" is "belief in one another." In that sense it means that the votaries of the same and related professions believe in each other, and, to carry the thought further, those who are engaged in related professions believe that coöperatively they can and will do better work. It is applied serviceable friendship of those coöperating, and for those served—the public.

E. G. E.

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#### THE NEXT PHARMACOPOEIA.

The following letter to pharmacists has been issued by Chairman C. H. LaWall of the Committee of Revision of the United States Pharmacopoeia. All pharmacists are invited to assist by offering suggestions for the next revision. A separate sheet is to be used for each subject discussed, giving first the title of the subject, then a brief abstract of recommendation, the details and reasons for proposal. The address of the Chairman is 39 So. 10th street, Philadelphia, Pa. The letter follows:

"May, 1920, only a little more than a year hence, will again witness the assembling in Washington of the delegates to the United States Pharmacopoeial Convention. This fact should stimulate pre-convention activity on the part of those who have had experience with the present revision and are prepared to suggest improvements for a new edition.

"It is desirable at this time that pharmacists, physicians, chemists, botanists, biological experts, or any others who use the U. S. P. IX should submit to the Chairman of the Revision Committee, either personally or through associations, such helpful information as their experience may have suggested, or which may have come to their attention.

"These suggestions will be compiled systematically and circularized to the present Revision Committee, the authors being credited in each instance with the recommendations, and the compilation will be submitted to the 1920 Convention for the benefit of the new Committee of Revision.

(Signed) CHARLES H. LAWALL."