EDITORIAL

E. G. EBERLE, Editor 253 Bourse Bldg., PHILADELPHIA

GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED IN REVISING THE NATIONAL FORMULARY.

AT the recent meeting of the National Formulary Committee a considerable portion of the time was spent in considering the fundamental principles to be followed in this revision.

The Formulary needs to occupy a place of leadership in pharmacy, and to do this it must not follow usage in all respects, but must have a purpose of its own beyond that of simply perpetuating desirable formulas. This means some change in policy, and it is the desire of the present committee that this policy shall be sound and lasting. If it proves so, the Formulary will establish an enduring place for itself in pharmacy which cannot be occupied by any other book. If the readers of this JOURNAL see any weakness in the policy which the committee has adopted, they will do a kindness to pharmacy to point out such errors before the policy shall have become established. For while the following rules have been formally adopted, they can be changed, at any time, by the same body that adopted them:

1. "*Scope and Purpose of the National Formulary.*—The purpose of the National Formulary is to supply definite formulas for preparations sufficiently used in medical practice throughout the United States and its possessions, for which formulas are not included in the United States Pharmacopoeia; to provide standards and tests for the identity, quality and purity of the essential ingredients used in these formulas, which are not standardized by the Pharmacopoeia, so that uniformity in physical properties and action of constituents will be assured."

The intent of this paragraph is plain. It recognizes the precedence of the Pharmacopoeia and establishes the scope of the Formulary.

2. "*Admissions.*—Any formula in sufficient use may be admitted into the National Formulary, but no proprietary or trade-mark name shall be applied thereto, nor shall it be the aim of the Formulary to supply imitations of such proprietary or trade-marked article."

This is essentially the position of the Pharmacopoeia regarding proprietary articles. And it establishes the policy of the National Formulary as regards imitations, particularly in regard to physical characteristics of the preparations. That is, when a preparation is designedly colored to make it distinctive, the color is not to be imitated by the Formulary just because it has been adopted by the proprietors.

In the matter of imitation it is necessary to consider whether the preparation would be acceptable if uncolored, and whether the color used is original in conception or is commonly employed for liquids of that character. Also whether the flavor follows general lines or is individualistic. For instance, red is a very common color in elixirs, and orange, in modified character, is a very common flavor. To color a liquid red may not be a matter of imitation, nor to flavor it predominantly with orange, though the suggesting preparation may be red in

color and flavored with orange. Thus this principle may call for interpretation as to its real meaning in individual cases, but it shall be the aim of the Formulary to avoid direct imitations of commercial preparations.

3. "*Construction of Formulas.*—Formulas shall be listed in alphabetical sequence, and whenever possible general formulas for classes may be adopted; the metric weights and measures only are to be used."

4. "*Arrangement of Subject Matter.*—The National Formulary shall be arranged in three parts. All formulas shall be in Part I, standards for non-pharmacopoeial ingredients to constitute Part II, and special tests, reagents and reference tables to be in Part III."

This continues the present general arrangement of the book. The division into parts I and II has received some criticism, but it emphasizes the fact that the book is primarily a formulary and that Part II is simply to supply needed standards on which some of the formulas are based. Already the demand has come that certain simples which are not in the Pharmacopoeia nor included in the formulas of the National Formulary shall be recognized, but to do that would invariably lead to confusion regarding the scope of the National Formulary and be very liable to lead to conflicts with the scope or standards of the Pharmacopoeia. The recognition of non-formulary simples is a tacit endorsement of therapeutic value, and that the Formulary seeks to evade.

5. "*To Accept Pharmacopoeial Principles.*—The principles adopted by the U. S. Pharmacopoeial Convention to be followed in revising the Pharmacopoeia, relating to nomenclature, changes in titles, synonyms, abbreviations, purity, rubric, international standards, physical constants, standard temperature, pharmacognostic descriptions, powdered drugs, solubilities and doses, shall be followed in the revision of the National Formulary."

This not only insures unity with the Pharmacopoeia in style and general principles, but it recognizes the precedence of the Pharmacopoeia and insures against discrepancies and contradictory standards. There should be but one fundamental principle in standardizing drugs and preparations, and the two works are thus in agreement thereto.

6. "*Therapeutic Responsibility.*—The National Formulary does not assume any responsibility for the therapeutic value of any preparation."

Here is where the National Formulary differs from the U. S. P. And it is also why the N. F. should avoid recognizing any drugs or chemicals except for the purpose of standardizing formulas. The National Formulary places the responsibility of deciding therapeutic value upon the general medical practitioner, regardless of what school or branch of medicine he may favor, and in recognition of the physician's right to employ as a remedy any preparation which he may desire. The recognition of preparations in the Formulary is based upon what the physicians desire to use. But the N. F. must recognize therapeutics to the extent of eliminating incompatibilities that may be dangerous or unscientific.

7. "*Assay Processes.*—Assay processes for as many of the potent drugs and preparations made therefrom as may be found practicable, shall be introduced into the National Formulary."

This is simply in the interest of definite standards. The assay process should, of course, be indicative of the therapeutic action of the drug, again recognizing, to some extent, a therapeutic responsibility.

8. "*Alcoholic Percentage.*—It is recommended that whenever practicable, the range of the content of absolute alcohol by volume be stated in the Formulary, accompanying the text for each preparation containing alcohol."

So long as the law requires the statement of alcoholic strength on the label, this form of help to the pharmacist is desirable. The range is intended to allow of reasonable variations when the preparation is made in accordance with the formula and with proper care.

9. "*Alcohol in Formulary Preparations.*—The proportion of alcohol entering into each formula in the National Formulary shall be carefully studied, and fixed at the minimum amount necessary for the therapeutic activity, solution, permanency or preservation of the preparation."

This is in accordance with the demand of the day—to reduce or eliminate alcohol, in so far as possible. But the Committee will not be governed simply by solubility questions. Often alcohol is needed for maintaining activity in much larger proportions than may be required for solubility or to prevent fermentative changes or bacterial growths. No reduction of alcohol will be made unless the Committee is satisfied that the preparation will suffer no loss in medicinal value thereby.

10. "*Modified Dose Statement.*—There shall be appended to each dose-statement the amount of active ingredient in the dose given."

This will be a convenience both to pharmacists and physicians. One will need only to consult the dose statement to learn not only the dose of the preparation but also the amount of active medicinal agents in the dose given. For instance, Elixir of Iron, Quinine and Strychnine will have its dose stated, then the amount of iron, of quinine, and of strychnine in the dose.

11. "*Enumeration of National Formulary Preparations in which Official Substances are Used.*—It is recommended that there be appended after each article in the text a list of National Formulary preparations in which it is an active essential ingredient, and that there be also given a list of U. S. P. substances used as active ingredients and the National Formulary preparations into which they enter."

This means that physicians and pharmacists will have available a complete list of official preparations of any particular substance. Heretofore the Pharmacopoeia has had a list and the National Formulary none. Now the Formulary will have a list to include the preparation of U. S. P. articles, so that the physician can tell at once what preparations are available containing any particular active drug, either alone or in combination.

12. "*Publicity.*—The National Formulary Committee shall publish from time to time abstracts of important changes or proposed new monographs and invite comment and suggestion before final adoption."

The Committee desires all the help that pharmacists will give in making the book useful and satisfactory. The more open its work the better should be the results, for "in a multitude of councillors there is wisdom." Here is the place for readers to begin. Speak out your comments and suggestions on these principles, and let us improve them. And it is not necessary to wait for other questions to come up. Suggest now!

13. "*Date of Adoption.*—The National Formulary Committee shall establish a definite date when the Fifth Edition of the National Formulary shall go into

effect, and the Committee will publish this date as far ahead as circumstances will permit."

These are the thirteen points which the Committee adopted in conference. We hope that thirteen will prove to be more lucky and effectual than would fourteen, but another will be added if it is needed.

W. L. SCOVILLE.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE vital force behind any institution, or organization, such as the American Pharmaceutical Association, is the spirit of solidarity—a shoulder to shoulder standing together, backing up the institution in all lines of its endeavor. It is at least one of the important vital forces.

The main endeavor or purpose of the American Pharmaceutical Association, in the three score and ten years of its existence, has not required re-formulation or revision, being now, as always, broadly expressed, the advancement of pharmacy in all of its branches—scientific, educational and commercial. This aim has attracted and evoked the interest of the best talent of our profession, drawn to the organization eminent pharmacists, in great numbers, whose lofty aim has contributed much toward the progress to which pharmacy is now heir. These Nestors of pharmacy, whose names we hold sacred, served intelligently and effectively in shaping the policy and in uniting the hands of the toilers in the common purpose. To-day, in the year 1920, the policy and ideal of the membership, as a whole, is the same as that of 1852, namely, that of uplifting our chosen vocation. To this end we speak, act and serve together.

It is a matter of congratulation that in recent years the organization has grown rapidly. Council reports contain, at frequent intervals, a list of new names, showing a constant influx of new blood, which indicates a wholesome forward movement. The animation and enthusiasm of the vigorous red fluid is highly prized. It is important, however, that much of the new element shall be properly "converted," so to speak—converted into the ideal for which the Association has always stood. This is important not only for the good of the Association but also for the good of the initiated.

It is also gratifying that there is in the Association an ardent desire for what may be termed material progress resulting from, or brought about by, federation and coöperation with different branches of our vocation. The Association needs for this the innate zeal of the newer element. Once accomplished, the "solidarity and force" of the Association will certainly be more pronounced—on the material side, at least.

A word of caution, however, seems to be in place in this connection. A word of caution from the standpoint of a conservative—from one who is jealous about the so-called ethical side, or quality, of the Association, the most important quality—the "*spirit*" of the Association. A conservative will not lose sight of this. In the material progress which the Association is seeking we should conserve that element for which the Association has stood for almost three-quarters of a century. Ethical progress should keep pace with the material.