

## SYMPOSIUM SESSION

### REPORT OF A SYMPOSIUM ON TABLETS

At the Symposium Session the Chairman, Dr. H. Davis, presided, and introductory addresses were given by Mr. H. D. Fitch, Mr. H. Burlinson and Mr. T. C. Denston.

Mr. Fitch, speaking from the dispensing point of view, said that the advantages of tablets included accurate dosage, portability and mass production, with resultant economy, but although it seemed that pharmacists might be developing into "mere tablet-counters" it would still be essential for them to have full knowledge of material used.

A recent report on test prescriptions had shown that some samples of tablets failed to comply with the official disintegration test, and packaging and labelling of tablets from pharmacies had been criticised recently by a public analyst.

The pharmacist should check the condition of the tablets and date stock on receipt. He should ensure that conditions of storage are suitable. Many factors are responsible for deterioration, and often the product is better protected by the manufacturers' original container than in stock bottles. Care should be taken to avoid over-stocking of those drugs which are sensitive to atmospheric moisture and other external conditions. Many tablets should be dispensed in well-closed containers and protected from light or moisture, particularly as the patient might keep them in a steamy kitchen or under similar unsuitable conditions; again, the manufacturer's original packing was often the best, but in many cases the number prescribed did not tally with the original pack. Strip packing in "Cellophane" or metal foil was satisfactory in preserving tablets in good condition, and it also protected the tablets from the attention of young children. On the other hand, this type of packing was costly, and too bulky when a large number of tablets was prescribed.

The variation in the size of tablets from one batch to another had often caused trouble. The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry recommended sizes for many of the official tablets, but variation still occurred in tablets obtained from the same or different makers which led to technical explanations which were incomprehensible to a querulous patient. Coated and coloured tablets were open to misuse, and had proved too attractive to young children on many occasions, sometimes with fatal results.

The addresses of Mr. Burlinson and Mr. Denston are printed below in abridged form.