

# CANADIAN DRUGGIST.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE GENERAL DRUG TRADE AND TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHARMACY.

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## CANADIAN DRUGGIST.

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### Pharmacy Act Amendment.

Pharmacists are receiving an unprecedented amount of attention at present from the press of Ontario. Not only the daily and weekly newspapers, but also the society papers and trade journals, with remarkable simultaneousness, have all appeared with leading articles denunciatory of "druggists' charges," "druggists' selfishness," "druggists' combines," etc., etc., and have appealed to the *bought* public against the "extraordinary" enactments and "iniquitous" legislation asked for in the Pharmacy Act Amendment which is about to be introduced in the Local Legislature of this Province.

#### AS IT AFFECTS PATENT MEDICINES.

As far as we can make out, the sum and substance of the complaint seems to be summed up in the statement which appears in *Hardware* of March 25th, (it must concern hardware merchants very intensely) that "there are about 3,300 general merchants in the Province selling patent medicines, compared with probably about four-fifths of that number of druggists," and that it would be a great hardship to take this trade from the general merchant, and would be interfering with the "public weal." Now, this tirade against druggists appears to us to be owing mainly to two things. First, a misconception of the intention of the framers of the proposed amendment, and second, the careless wording used in the framing of the amendment.

That portion of the amendment which refers immediately to the sale of proprietary medicines occurs in section 8, where it says that "section 24 of the Pharmacy

Act be repealed and the following substituted therefor," "No person shall sell or keep open shop for retailing, dispensing or compounding poisons, or medicines of any kind, or sell, or attempt to sell, any of the articles mentioned in Schedule 'A' of this Act, or any mixture or compound containing any of the articles so mentioned in Schedule 'A,' . . . unless such person has taken out a certificate under the provisions of section 18 of this Act."

In order to show why it has been deemed advisable to amend this clause, and what has prompted this step, we might say that, in the first place, the idea of such a change, as far as we can learn, did not originate with the druggists of the Province nor with the Council of the College of Pharmacy whose duty it is to look after the legislation of all matters connected with the drug trade. It will probably be remembered by most of our readers that some time ago a death occurred through an overdose of an advertised cough remedy. The Coroner's Jury, who sat in this case, censured the Council for not having passed a prohibitory measure, preventing the indiscriminate sale of remedies containing poisons, and, we believe, made a presentment to the Provincial Government asking for remedial legislation. Not long after this, a case occurred, when another Coroner's Jury found a verdict of death from a preparation said to contain arsenic, and they also censured the framers of the Pharmacy Act for allowing "poisonous preparations" to be sold without proper restrictions. Considering these cases, as well as other unfortunate accidents which happened from similar causes, the Council deemed it a duty, not for the protection of the druggist, but as a protection to the general public, to submit to the Legislature an amendment to the Act now in force whereby the indiscriminate sale of preparations containing poisons would be prevented. And they argued, and it must be granted, not without some show of reason, that the permission to sell such preparations should be limited only to those who are allowed by law to sell poisons. Druggists are liable to certain prescribed penalties if they transgress section 26 of the Act, which says, "No person shall sell any poison named in the first part of Schedule 'A' either by wholesale or retail, unless the box, bottle, or vessel, wrapper, or cover in which the poison is contained is distinctly labelled with the name of the article and the word 'Poison.'" It will

therefore be seen that the only material difference is, that it is desired to insert the words, "or any mixture or compound containing any of the articles mentioned in Schedule 'A'" in lieu of the clause as it stands at present.

Patent medicine manufacturers have, we understand, expressed their determination to oppose the passing of the amendment, because of this clause, and no doubt they will make their influence felt when it comes to a vote in the House, but to make druggists responsible for the action taken or to strive to lay on them the onus of a measure, which has been asked for by the public, is both ungenerous and unjust. Notwithstanding the utterances of a few druggists, the trade are not in favor of doing away with the patent medicine trade, it is a profitable adjunct and one that is quite as much a portion of their business as are many of the lines usually kept. Many of the proprietaries now in the market, are, we believe, excellent remedies for the ailments specified, and an intelligent public should be able to use them without injury if proper attention was given to the directions prescribed, but when the question arises as to the sale of *all* remedies whether they contain poison or not, and that the question is one raised by the public for the public safety and through the public's representative officials, it is time to consider whether the sale of such goods should not be regulated by law and limited to those whose business it is and who are legally empowered to sell medicines in any form and who are amenable to the law for any infraction of it as laid down in the statute book.

Such a limitation of sale could not affect the output of these goods and would only tend to concentrate their sale in the hands of the drug trade, and do away with the multitudinous accounts of the general store, the corner grocery, and the city dry goods man. The fallacious argument used, that it would be a serious inconvenience to people in the country not to be able to procure whatever "patents" they wanted is too transparent as the number of drug stores throughout the province renders it quite possible to get medicine within reasonable time and in close proximity to their homes.

#### AFFECTING THE SALE OF DRUGS.

In the portion of clause 8 of the proposed amendment already quoted, occur the words "or medicines of any kind."