

CORRESPONDENCE.

Correspondence is invited from all members of the profession. We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions of correspondents. All communications must have the name of the writer attached, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. Any nom de plume may be used for publication. Write only on one side of the paper, and be concise.

Editor Canadian Druggist:

The suggestions of Mr. Petrie *re* Price Books is worthy of serious consideration. There is no doubt that the present condition of the drug trade, to say nothing of the profession, is such that to maintain our position in the community, requires the best ability to be found amongst the profession. I am not one of the "oldest," but within my recollection our position as a profession and trade has become very much infringed upon and restricted. Hence the necessity for unanimity, not only in sentiment as to the position and rights which are ours, but uniformity of prices ought also to prevail, which would tend more to foster a healthy, fraternal feeling amongst the druggists of the Province. But some one says, "Show us a plan by which to accomplish your object." Here is one which I have been giving some thought to.

The Province being divided into districts, let each district name three or four of its members, who with the council representative would form a delegation to a conference composed of the delegates from all the districts. The district delegates should secure all possible information as to prices in their respective districts; also a list of all articles kept in drug stores, I mean drugs and sundries; it is not to be expected that paints, oils, &c., can reasonably be included in a druggists' price list. This data secured, the difficulty presents itself, viz:—upon what principle shall the prices be fixed. The necessity for a certain amount of elasticity, if we may use that term, is apparent. The first thing to do is to ascertain the cost of selling goods, which can be done by securing from as many druggists as possible the ratio of expense, exclusive of living expenses, to both cost of goods, and total volume of business; some have estimated this at from 20 per cent. to 35 per cent. of the volume of business done. It is easier to see that the larger the volume of business the less the relative expense of doing business. Enquiry and experience lead me to believe that in village and town stores the per cent. is about 25 or 30. The next question to decide is whether the profits to be derived shall be estimated by per cent. or shall there merely be a re-adjustment of the prices which have prevailed for so long. If the latter, what plan will secure uniformity. There is but one which appears feasible, that is to adopt for each article the lowest price for which such article is sold in any part of the province, this price to be a minimum, and any druggist who considers it too low can increase the price. The cost of drugs is virtually the same to all druggists, subject to the fluctuations of the

market, which do not always favor the same individual; freights, express, &c., to long distances are a very small item in the increased cost of goods, hence it may be assumed that goods bought on the same day from the same house will cost the same delivered to any part of the province. Any difference will be so small that the profit secured by the sale will be sufficient to cover the increased cost of delivery and still not put the individual at any decided disadvantage to his competitors. Thus the adoption of the lowest price will not work any injustice to the druggists of the province, as surely no one can be found foolish enough to sell goods at less than a living profit. Exception would have to be made to prices the direct result of cutting.

The price book secured, how shall it be placed in the hands of the druggists, and its universal adoption secured? This is the most difficult part of the programme. I have some suggestions, but will defer for a time.

It is to be hoped that the District Associations will take this matter up and thus pave the way to increase the prosperity and influence of the druggists of the province. Our field of action is being ruthlessly trespassed on and unless some decided stand is taken our profession will become a by word and reproach.

Yours truly,

R. S. MUIR.

PORT ELGIN, Dec. 4, 1890.

To the Editor:

DEAR SIR,—A communication, signed J. F. Burkholder, hailing from London, Ont., appears in the December number of the *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal* in which the writer discourses eloquently on "cabbage heads," "Darwinian movement of plants," "Kentucky blue licks," "Spectrum analysis" and "Science" all in one breath. As Mr. B. is, I believe, a graduate of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, he probably knows a great deal about these subjects and feels delighted in airing them to "those druggists who never saw the inside of a college door," (what a beautiful sight it must be, and how it would astonish the poor, ignorant, ancient druggist to see it).

But, sir, aside from all the frivolous exclamations from a person who has seen the "inside" of a college door, what do the contentions amount to? Simply this, that the Council, according to his idea sought in some way to "bully the teachers," and wished to show their authority. Now, while not appearing as an apologist for any of the Council, and not desiring to shield them in any way in which they may have erred, I think the facts prove conclusively that the "shoe is on the other foot" altogether. As a prominent ex-member of the Council remarked—*this* Council seems determined to run their own business themselves, instead of allowing the professors to run it for them—and, are they not right? Do not we druggists send these men as our representatives to manage the affairs of the Col-

lege, not to ask any professor how it should be managed? That, in "my humble opinion" is the secret of the matter. What our College wants is an able teaching staff, who, with their work laid out for them, will use their utmost endeavors to make the College as it should be, one of the leading exponents of pharmaceutical teaching on this continent, leaving the work of Council management entirely to the Council, whose province it is to see that in its hands every student has the best of pharmaceutical training and laboratory experience, and that the provisions of the Pharmacy Act are faithfully carried out.

Thanking you for valued space, I am
Yours truly,

WESTERN DRUGGIST.

To the Editor of The Canadian Druggist:

There is considerable talk *re* coming elections, but many of the districts have not even local organizations. Owing to the importance of the coming election is it not time that some active work was being done?
ORGANIZE.

Pharmacy in Bulgaria.

The Austrian journals are paying special attention just now to pharmaceutical affairs in Bulgaria, which seems to be a kind of happy hunting-ground for crowded-out pharmacists from the dual monarchy. Some months ago we published some particulars concerning the condition of pharmacy in the Bulgarian principality, and we now add to the particulars then given some details gathered from recent issues of the journal of the Austrian *Apotheker-Verein* and the *Pharmaceutische Post*. Bulgaria is divided into departments, which are subdivided into districts. In most of the departmental capitals, towns of 9,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, but including, very often, an administrative area of 60,000 to 70,000 inhabitants, there is generally only one pharmacy, which might be supposed to do a splendid trade, and would do so but for the fact that the illegal exercise of the craft—in spite of the stringency of the laws which are supposed to protect the legitimate professors of the art—is almost openly practiced throughout the country by itinerant hawkers, quacks and priests. The establishment of pharmacies is only allowed by special consent.

Many druggists are asking about California bees. The *Toronto Evening News* reports the following:—California bees are simply a fungus growth which is found on the inside of a beer tap, and which, like all other fungi, has the power to increase rapidly with apparently little or no sustenance. Put two tablespoonfuls of molasses and two teaspoonfuls of brown sugar to a quart of water and let it stand three days; then bottle it, putting three good teaspoonfuls of sugar and about a third of a teaspoonful of home-ground ginger to a quart of the beer and let it stand two days. Look out for your eye when you open the bottle.