

## Ontario Society of Retail Druggists.

## ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the Ontario Society of Retail Druggists was held in the lecture theatre of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, Toronto, on Wednesday, September 9th. The meeting was called for one o'clock, but the members were very dilatory in gathering, and a protracted executive meeting in the forenoon detained the officers, so that it was nearly half-past two o'clock before President G. E. Gibbard took the chair, the attendance then numbering nearly one hundred.

Having opened the proceedings with a few words of welcome, the president called Mr. W. A. Karn to the chair while he read the following address:

In the course of his remarks the president said the evil we undertook to fight had taken fast hold of many places in the provinces, and this evil is such that the present tendency of trade is certain to foster its growth. In those places where the druggists themselves had given way to the evil tendencies, demoralization was complete. The last vestige of profit had been swept away. Men had turned their places of business into free distributing depots of patent medicines, in some places even offering a premium to the public to come and relieve them of the stock. In one town a member of the trade informed your president that on the sale of \$2,000 worth of one preparation he had not made a profit of \$10. In the city of Brantford at the present time twenty-five articles are being advertised at five cents. These places are a sample of what occurs when the druggists are the transgressors. The seriousness of this condition of affairs can be appreciated when we consider that fully fifty per cent. of the trade of a country druggist is in patent medicines. With the cities of Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Brantford as centres from which to radiate, the pernicious practice had spread to many places in their vicinities, and threatened every town and city in the province. The danger was most imminent in the west, where a feeling of feverish unrest existed which augured ill for the trade in general. To check the spread of the plague and restore to a healthy condition the trade, where attacked by the disease, was the task imposed on your officers.

Entire success during the short time which has elapsed since our organization is too much for even the most sanguine to expect. When the work was actively entered upon many unforeseen difficulties were encountered, and a number of these have still to be overcome. First among these I might mention the lack of complete unity in our own ranks. Again, we discovered that large stocks of patent medicines are carried by wholesale grocers of Montreal. From these the cutter has been able to replenish his depleted store when his orders were declined by our friendly houses. Another serious difficulty faced us early in the campaign, and one which

hampered the work more than all others, I refer to the shortness of funds. The first two of these difficulties still exist, but the last has happily been overcome. There are a number of minor troubles, but these would rapidly disappear before a perfect organization and a short period of vigorous activity, leaving the way clear for a bold onslaught upon our principal enemies. While confining our operations principally to the Province of Ontario, we yet realize the great advantage a united Dominion would be in securing the end aimed at. Accordingly we placed ourselves in communication with the members of the trade in other provinces, and have had the satisfaction of seeing the formation of similar societies in all the other provinces but one.

The questions, "What good has your society done anyway?" and, "Why should we contribute money to keep it going?" have been often addressed to your officers.

We might state briefly, then, some of the results of our work.

(1) The spread of cutting has been prevented. Only one new cut-rate store has come under our notice within the last nine months. Whereas, had it not been for the influence of our society, we believe, and it is also the opinion of others well informed, that the whole of Eastern Ontario would have been overrun with the practice before now.

(2) When we started nine months ago there were at least twenty-five places in different sections of the country where "persistent cutting" prevailed. That number is now reduced to about five. In all but one of these five the conditions are much improved, prices generally have advanced and demoralizing advertising has almost ceased.

(3) We have prevented new preparations just being put upon the market from falling immediately into the hands of the cutters, and thus saved to the druggist many good dollars in profit, which otherwise would have gone elsewhere.

(4) We have aroused the trade of the Dominion to a realization of the threatened danger, and "forewarned being forearmed" it is now in a better position to protect itself against dangerous enemies.

To these might be added the spirit of good fellowship which such societies as ours engenders amongst its members.

Before closing, I wish to bear testimony to the valuable assistance rendered your officers by the members of the wholesale jobbing trade, and also a portion of the manufacturers. Their friendliness to the society from the first enabled us to accomplish much in a short time which otherwise would yet have remained undone. Your executive have shown a willingness to sacrifice personal matters to the general good which should receive proper recognition at your hands. I cannot refrain from a word of praise for your secretary. When we entered upon the work there was a fear that the president

and secretary residing in different towns would be a disadvantage, and probably interfere with the success of our plans. Such a fear has proved groundless, and it has been advantageous rather than otherwise. Not only does the amount of work done by Mr. Pepper call for special mention, but its manner of doing has been most praiseworthy. With ability and willingness is combined enthusiasm and determination, all going to make up a first-class secretary.

Reference was also made to the death of Mr. W. G. Smith, of Guelph, a member of the executive.

We are obliged to curtail the president's address on account of lack of space.

At the conclusion of his remarks the president resumed the gavel, and Mr. Karn moved the reception of the address, expressing at the same time his regret that the druggists did not take more interest in the doings of the association. The future of the trade was in their own hands, and negligence of the work the society had undertaken must inevitably mean disaster. Their very existence was at stake, and who could be expected to protect them if they did not look after it themselves? (Hear, hear.)

The address was received and laid on the table for future consideration.

Mr. J. T. Pepper, Woodstock, presented his report as secretary-treasurer. It showed the society to have a membership of 650, so that only about 100 druggists were not in sympathy with the movement. Many, however, had not paid the full membership fee, and that matter was dealt with later on. The receipts from members' fees were \$1,167.79, and from other sources \$185.75, making the total receipts \$1,353.54. The expenditure had been \$1,286.19, so that there was a balance in hand of \$67.35. The report was received and adopted *nem. con.*

A communication was read from Mr. R. W. Chambers, of Blenheim, regretting his inability to attend the meeting, and asking how it was that Robert Simpson continued in the drug business after having been fined in the police court.

The three members of the trade in Dunnville also wrote congratulations upon the work so far accomplished by the society, and stating that a meeting of District No. 10 a resolution had been passed calling on the society to take steps to place Paris green and sulphate of copper upon the poison list. This letter was referred to the executive.

Upon the suggestion of the executive, through the president, a nominating committee was struck, consisting of a representative from each district, to nominate officers for the year. The committee retired to prepare their report.

Mr. Phillips, of Fergus, asked what answer the executive had to offer to the question Mr. Chambers had sent in reference to The Robert Simpson Company.

Mr. W. A. Karn, as chairman of the Infringement Committee of the O.C.P.