

It has been suggested that the scheduling of certain preservatives as alone permissible would put a stop to the investigatory and experimental work now carried on by the manufacturers who, it is asserted, are continuously seeking for new substances suitable to their needs. There does not seem to me to be much force in this contention. If we assume that no manufacturer would wish to employ a new preservative until he had made sure of its harmless character; then the evidence which serves to satisfy himself of this fact could easily be adduced before a government committee; and if it proved to be convincing, such new preservative could easily be added to the list. The literature of formaldehyde is in evidence to show that, in this particular case, certain manufacturers were satisfied with data which entirely failed to satisfy disinterested experts.

Finally, I have several times been asked, 'Is it possible for an honest and conscientious manufacturer to use a preservative, in view of the conflicting evidence which investigators have put on record?' In reply I would say, that I can easily conceive the natural bias of a manufacturer in favour of preservatives to lead him to accept the conclusions of men like Dr. Liebreich and Dr. Lebbin and others, as sufficient justification for the careful and judicious employment of boron compounds, sulphites and benzoates; while the concessions of the English Parliamentary Committee in regard to the first two named may seem to give him full warranty for their use. The attitude of the consumer towards the matter is quite different, as I have already pointed out. His preference should undoubtedly be for fresh food, or for food preserved by methods which have stood the test of time, and have proved their harmlessness.

Important opinions upon the subject of legislation regarding preservatives, are as follows:—

M. FAYOLLE (Bull. Scien. Pharmacolog, 1904, 172; abst. Zeit. für Nahr. and Genussm., 1905, 374).

After referring to the demonstrations of the consulting committee of hygiene, as proving interference with assimilation and reduction of activity of the digestive ferments, due to preservatives in foods, says: 'A partial prohibition is insufficient. Only a general law which shall make the addition of such preservatives a punishable offence can be effective.'

ECCLES, R. G. (Amer. Jour. Pharm., 1904, 506) contends that the opposition to the use of preservatives is based on theoretical considerations. He asserts that statistics prove that countries in which the use of preservatives is forbidden, show a higher percentage of deaths due to diseases of the digestive tract than those in which no laws against preservatives exist.

In his recently issued work on Food Preservatives (New York: Van Nostrand & Co.), a very lucidly written book of 202 pages; Dr. Eccles shows an extensive acquaintance with the literature of his subject.

Chapters III, IV, and V. contain many references of value. Dr. Eccles is, however, a special pleader; and the judicial attitude towards his subject is conspicuously lacking. Such sentences as the following bear out this contention:

'Food commissioners and food chemists, for some reason, do not interfere with sugar manufacturers and candy men as they do with catsup bottlers and fruit juice bottlers.'—(p. 37.) 'Surely no one can seriously contend that the almost weekly recurrence of cases of severe ptomaine poisoning is at all comparable with the imaginary ills that preservatives are supposed, by some people, to produce.'—(p. 23.) It is regrettable that Dr. Eccles should have allowed himself to depart from clear and plain statement, because he has much of real value to say; and an unbiassed narrative of experience and fact is always valuable and welcome.

Many of his statements clearly indicate his standing as a special pleader. Such are the following: 'There is absolutely nothing inherently injurious in substances the dose of which is kept below the limit of minimum medicinal effect.'—(p. 197.) 'By permitting free competition in the use of preservatives, newer and better ones are sure to be sought for and discovered.'—(p. 34.) Apart from the fact that it is out of the question that a long-suffering public should permit 'free competi-