

**Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of
the Pharmaceutical Association of the Province of Quebec.**

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perseveringly introduced to the medical profession by manufacturing pharmacists. Dispensing chemists have now to keep in stock a full line of pills, both sugar coated and gelatin, of at least four different manufacturers, while the various elixirs, pepsines, pancreatines, wines and syrups are a legion in themselves, to say nothing of the expensive French specialties so frequently ordered. How any pharmacist with a moderate stock manages to fill all the prescriptions brought to him is a mystery which is as impossible to solve as that still greater mystery which enables the manufacturer's agent to so successfully hoodwink the well-educated physician. If the present craze for ready-made compounds and specialties with trade-marked names does not soon cease the art of prescribing will be lost, and the Pharmacopœia will be a thing of the past.

The question of the examinations, both preliminary, minor and major, is a matter about which the members of the Council should endeavor to obtain the fullest information. Articles on this extremely difficult subject are continually appearing in all the leading scientific journals and monthly magazines, and I know of no subject about which such contradictory opinions are advanced. We are all interested in finding out the best method of accurately gauging the qualifications of the examined.

I have during the past year received several private letters relating to our own examinations, both preliminary, minor and major, but as the majority of them were either from the parents of the candidates or from the candidates themselves, you may readily believe that the reasoning contained in them is considerably biased. With regard to the preliminary examinations, I am strongly of opinion that one teacher from the Catholic and another from the Protestant Normal Schools should be asked to fill the position of examiners in Montreal, and also the same in Quebec. There has always been a difficulty in getting men from the ranks of our practical pharmacists to take the position of preliminary examiners, and it is self-evident that men engaged daily in teaching are better qualified for the position than men who have left College some years. With regard to the major and minor examiners, the best men for the purpose are those who are daily engaged in the practice of pharmacy. The Council must see to it that none but men specially qualified for the position, and of the highest character are appointed.

There are some points with regard to the preliminary examinations which deserve to be noted; for instance, the majority of the candidates who present themselves before the preliminary board of examiners are young men who have passed

some years in classical colleges, high schools, or academies. Most of those from classical colleges have left at the end of their belle-lettres or rhetoric course, and those from the high schools at the end of their grammar course. The total number of candidates who presented themselves for the preliminary examination during the past year was 143; of this number 70 failed to pass in arithmetic. To my mind this is conclusive evidence of a want of appreciation of this important subject either on the part of teachers or pupils. It seems reasonable to say that if these young men, representing 50% of the whole, had received proper instruction in arithmetic such a large proportion would not have failed at the examinations.

During the past year there has been a movement in favor of day lectures, and it at first appeared as though a number of employers were in favor of the idea; but, on further consideration and discussion of the subject in all its bearings, it was found to be not only against the best interests of the clerks themselves, but also against that of the larger number of employers. The standard required by the examinations, as they are at present, can readily be obtained by a little sacrifice of his evening's pleasure on the part of the clerk for a few months during each year, and that during the winter, while the employer, by arranging his staff to meet the exigencies of the case, need suffer no great hardship. On the other hand, should the clerks require to attend one or more lectures in the day-time, their value to their employers would be sensibly diminished, and they must expect a reduction in salary. It appears desirable, in view of the fact that the average young man who aspires to be a pharmacist is not as a rule the child of wealthy parents, his wage-earning powers should not in any way be interfered with. The ability, to earn wages is perhaps the only temptation to a number of young men who select pharmacy in preference to medicine, because they feel they can study their profession and at the same time support themselves. It is self-evident that this would not be the case in a large centre like Montreal if the clerks' attention were distracted during the day-time from the practical and commercial side of his occupation by the necessity of leaving his work to attend lectures.

There is a strong tendency springing up amongst young pharmacists to go into business on their own account as soon as they have obtained their license. This I look upon as a grave mistake; far better to get further practical experience as senior clerks and managers for a couple of years than by rushing into business without the commercial knowledge necessary. A situation in a large drug house in New York or London, or indeed in any large city, outside of the Province of Quebec, where the young pharmacist could get an insight into the great world beyond would tend to brighten the intellect, expand the mind and render the settling down to the

worry and anxiety of a chemist's life more acceptable.

With regard to an interchange of diplomas or licenses between the provinces of the Dominion and the states of the neighboring union, nothing further can be done until there is more uniformity in the pharmacy laws, as well as in the curriculum followed by the various colleges of pharmacy.

A topic which it may be as well to draw attention to at this time is the question as to how far pharmacists are justified in supplying tinctures made according to the United States Pharmacopœia. Neither the Dominion Parliament or the Local Legislatures have as yet legislated on the subject. In the preface to the British Pharmacopœia of 1867 the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom, which is charged with the publication of the pharmacopœia, states in the preface to the 1867 edition that "It is intended to afford to the members of the medical profession and those engaged in the preparation of medicines throughout the British Empire one uniform standard and guide." But after all, this is only an announcement of the council, and, of course, carries no legal weight with it in the Dominion of Canada. The Act itself, which appoints the General Medical Council, says "it is enacted that the British Pharmacopœia, when published, shall for all purposes be deemed to be substituted throughout Great Britain and Ireland for the several above-mentioned pharmacopœias," that is to say, the London, Edinburgh and Dublin pharmacopœias. By this it appears the Act does not apply to the British Empire, but only to Great Britain and Ireland, which is reasonable to suppose. Nothing that I can find obliges us legally to use the British Pharmacopœia. Custom alone has sanctioned its use amongst us. Living as we do, so near to and in such close communication with the immense confederation of states south of us, a great many preparations in daily use there are in demand here, and in Ontario I am informed that American prescriptions are daily dispensed in most pharmacies, and in increasing numbers.

Take as an example a pharmaceutical preparation in daily use—the tincture of arnica. No one in Canada would think of supplying the British tincture, which is made from the root and has no fragrance at all. What the public require is the tincture of arnica flowers, which is official in the United States Pharmacopœia. Then, again, many doctors who favor us with their custom object to pay the high price of tincture of rhubarb when made according to the British Pharmacopœia, which, among other things, contains Spanish saffron, the present price of which is from 80 cents to \$1.00 an ounce in Montreal, and saffron, we all know, is therapeutically inert. The United States tincture contains rhubarb, cardamoms and dilute spirit, and can be produced cheaper and is what the physicians who supply their own medicines to their patients

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