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THE EDITOR COMMENTS

PHARMACIST OR MERCHANT?

A letter came across our desk recently from a prominent pharmacist in Canada, in which he took very pointed snipes at “Public Relations Programs” conducted by provincial pharmacy bodies.

If this pharmacist did not enjoy the fruits of an excellent business which he has built up over many years, if he did not have as keen and perceptive a mind as he has, we might have taken no notice of his remarks. We might have put the letter aside with a mental comment of “sour grapes” and gone on with our business.

But this man is a good pharmacist. He has an enviable business. He is well known as a man with a keen mind. So instead of saying “sour grapes” we opened the file of advertisement reprints and looked at a series run by one of the provinces for the past three years.

The problem which faced this group—and the one which faces each individual druggist—is to instill pharmacy as a profession in the minds of the public. Somewhere between the revered and awe-inspiring apothecary of long ago with his wondrous arts, and the white-coated scientist of today, the North American public lost its conception of pharmacy as a profession. Is anyone but the profession to blame for this?

The soda fountains jammed with teen-agers, the paint and hardware departments, the china and jewellery, the toasters and frying pans, had little, if any place in a professional store.

Can the public be blamed if they think of the “drug store” in terms of sodas, ice cream, cigarettes, alarm clocks and newspapers? All pharmacy can do is try to change that conception with a slow, steady,

pedestrian-pace campaign of professionalism.

The campaign as it appeared was effective. No doubt there are many other ideas which could have been used, with equal impact, but this was a good campaign. As a group effort it is to be highly commended. But much still rests on the shoulders of the individual.

Each pharmacist must, of course, believe that he is a professional man, and act accordingly. The way in which he conducts himself, how he operates his pharmacy is noted by the public.

You are judged by your type of operation—pharmacist or merchant.



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TRACINETS

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