

A medical advertising agency man stated:

"Conventions are a laughing-stock. Burlesque shows complete with life-and-death products and developments of legitimate advertisers."

Another ad agency man commented:

"Clean up conventions and take out of them the burlesque show routines."

This statement, offered by a large ethical drug manufacturer, introduces the idea of Council Acceptance at the conventions:

"Conventions first of all must be improved. They are like county fairs, and things are not only disorganized but ridiculous. Not only cannot samples of non-Council Accepted products be given out, but instead of trying to make a convention a dignified affair and keeping out the side-show experiences, the AMA spends its time sending spies around to find out if a manufacturer is giving away free headache powders. Even if a physician personally requests a product which is not advertised, we can't give it to him."

Three ethical drug manufacturers made these comments:

"Conventions are terrible. Our own queries show that physicians regard conventions as holidays, and as the least effective phase of the AMA operations."

"Conventions are terrible for advertisers. Besides too much midway activity, they are always out of the way. The point system, too, is very bad."

"The midyear clinical session is a poor thing. It could be good, but it is always in an out-of-the-way place. If you don't go, however, you get a bad spot in the main convention."

One ad agency man complained of discrimination at conventions:

"The AMA conventions are too much like county fairs. The point system is unfair and discriminatory. The ethical advertisers and exhibitors are unable to compete with the girly shows. The AMA is not consistent—it lets big advertisers do what small ones can't."

The last comment on conventions which we are quoting, made by a manufacturer of X-ray equipment, was concerned chiefly with samples:

"The objective at AMA conventions seems to be to collect free samples. In fact, some of the commercial firms even furnish shopping bags with their name on the side as another means of advertising."

"The conventions give the appearance of being tremendous affairs, crowded with people. As far as the exhibitors are concerned, however, the attendance is often not good, even in spite of the big crowds. At least half of the people who attend the conventions could not buy the products exhibited anyway."

"It might help if the AMA could tighten up a little better as to who is allowed to attend the convention. They are not so big that they cannot be handled except in certain cities. The clinical meetings are always handled in other parts of the country, and this adds greatly to our expense. We dropped the clinical meetings this year."

The question of inserts was mentioned spontaneously by the majority of the advertisers interviewed. About half of the advertisers expressed a definite dislike for the Pfizer Spectrum insert because they felt that it gave Pfizer an unfair advantage over the other advertisers and because they felt it made the AMA the publisher of the Pfizer house organ.

About a quarter of the advertisers expressed admiration and complete approval of the Pfizer insert, and regretted that they had not initiated the idea instead of Pfizer.

Roughly another quarter approved completely of the ad from Pfizer's point of view but felt that from the AMA's point of view, it was a mistake in policy to accept it, chiefly because if others followed the precedent, JAMA would end up as being a hodgepodge of house organs and editorial matter, with the reader confused as to which was which.

One medical ad agency man made the following favorable comment:

"Spectrum is a big help to the book. It dresses it up and makes it more interesting. The MD's will turn to it the way they do to *OP* and *PSM*. It helps the book in appearance and helps the advertisers because it brings on more interest and readership of the ads. The rest of the book ought to be as good."

Four different ethical drug manufacturers made these comments:

"I suppose the Pfizer insert is being criticized by a lot of people, but personally I consider it helpful rather than the opposite. I wish all advertisers would make their ads as interesting to the doctor as these Pfizer ads. I should like to see a campaign to encourage advertisers to produce *educational* copy of this kind."