

NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

BETTER CHEMICAL NOMENCLATURE IN TRADE USAGE

Significant and very encouraging for the general use of better chemical nomenclature and orthography in America is the recent action of E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. in adopting names and spellings for its dyestuff intermediates which correspond with the usage considered best from a scientific point of view. The improved names are to be used by the Sales and Advertising Department and their use is being urged on others. Trade journals are showing a willingness to adopt these names, and every indication seems to be that the movement will assume a national aspect. In the past the greatest obstacle to the needed improvement in chemical nomenclature in this country has been the slowness of manufacturers of, and dealers in, chemical substances to change over to better names and spellings (better English, correct endings to designate class, etc.) from the frequently unsatisfactory ones which came into use in the early days when German business and influence were preponderant in our chemical trade. This has perhaps been natural enough but none the less unfortunate. The ice has been broken now, and it is to be hoped that the old reluctance to make changes will disappear. The dyestuff field is not the only one in which reform is needed.

The greatest appeal to the trade will very likely be from the point of view of standardization. There is a diversity of names and particularly of spellings in the case of many chemical substances. Accuracy and convenience will be promoted by the adoption and use of one name and spelling as a standard in each case. To avoid a new and added source of confusion caution is of course necessary in the establishment of standard forms. Standards cannot be multiplied. The American Dyes Institute has been suggested as the proper authority for the standardization of the names of compounds of interest to the dye industry. This institute or any other organization interested in chemical names will no doubt be willing to cooperate with the Committee of the AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY on Nomenclature, Spelling and Pronunciation, which committee in turn is cooperating with similar committees of the British chemical societies. Our committee is progressing, slowly of necessity, in the adoption of rules and forms, and I am sure that I can say for the committee that we will be glad to do all that we can to aid in the establishment of better usage in the trade. Such a movement has been on our program for a little later when further advanced in our work.

E. J. CRANE, *Chairman,*
Committee on Nomenclature, Spelling
and Pronunciation

COLUMBUS, OHIO
July 30, 1920

CHEMICAL READING COURSES

Editor of the Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry:

In connection with the "Chemical Reading Courses" appearing in the July and August 1920 issues of the JOURNAL, the attention of small libraries and general readers might profitably be called to two points not specifically mentioned, but, unfortunately, not always obvious to the layman who has an authoritative list at hand:

1—The constant output of new books makes it desirable to consider, also, the very latest literature for possible material supplementing the "Courses."

2—Since the "Courses" are brief lists selected from a large mass of literature, librarians should keep in mind the fact that there are available many other general works, and many works too special to be included, some of which may be of particular value in special cases.

Applying these suggestions to a single field—ferrous metallurgy—we find that "Electric Furnaces in the Iron and Steel Industry," by Rodenhauser *and others*, is available in a later edition than that mentioned.

Among the books *not* mentioned, "The Making, Shaping and Treating of Steel," by J. M. Camp and C. B. Francis, has appeared in a second edition (the first, published in 1919, was not widely distributed). It affords the best existing guide to modern American practice in iron and steel manufacture. "Iron and Steel," by H. P. Tiemann, is a dependable, encyclopedic guide to obsolete as well as modern processes. It is comprehensive in scope and, for the average library, it will furnish concise answers to more questions than will any other single work on ferrous metallurgy. La Verne W. Spring's "Non-technical Chats on Iron and Steel and Their Application to Modern Industry" is a popular, descriptive work of high value to the general reader.

The three books mentioned in the preceding paragraph are general in scope and the average library will find it advantageous to purchase them in addition to, *or instead of*, the works mentioned in the "Chemical Reading Courses." Specific problems, calling for books of a more special nature, will vary with each community and unlimited inclusion of such books is, of course, beyond the scope of these "Courses," but it is well to bear in mind that excellent American works are available, also, on many of the more specific problems of the iron and steel industry; for example, chemical analysis.

The "Chemical Reading Courses" are apparently not primarily intended to suggest reference literature, but perhaps a dozen of the titles listed are distinctively reference works. Since a beginning has been made, it might not be amiss to suggest to librarians the advisability of consulting some of the up-to-date reference lists, such as "Chemical Literature and Its Use," by Marion E. Sparks, 1919, and "Some Observations on Chemical Bibliographies," by Paul Escher, 1920.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PA.
September 18, 1920

E. H. MCCLELLAND

EXPLOSION OF FLASHLIGHT POWDERS

Editor of the Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry:

Recently a young student of my acquaintance, while experimenting with a "flashlight powder," which consisted of a mixture of potassium chlorate, sulfur, sodium carbonate, and red phosphorus, was so badly injured by an explosion that it was necessary to amputate his right hand.

In order to avoid repetition of such an explosion, or other explosions closely similar, students of elementary chemistry, particularly high-school students, ought to be emphatically warned against the danger existing in mixtures of oxidizing agents with either sulfur or red phosphorus, or with both. Furthermore, it is the duty of high-school chemistry teachers to discourage any attempt on the part of their pupils to experiment with flashlight powders, gunpowder, fireworks, semi-explosives, and the like.

192 WILKINS STREET
ROCHESTER, N. Y.
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RICHARD H. KERBS

COMPOSITION OF WATER-GLASS SOLUTIONS

Editor of the Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry:

Whenever the results of scientific work involving sodium silicate solutions are published, care should be taken to record the composition of such solutions.

The appellation "water glass" covers materials which differ