

**DRUG SUPPLIED
ASHBURTON CHEMIST FINED.
VETERINARY SURGEON ALSO CHARGED.**

UNUSUAL CASES IN COURT.

Said to have been brought as a warning, three charges of having sold a dangerous drug were preferred against John Sinclair, chemist, of Ashburton, in the Magistrate's Court this morning, and a veterinary surgeon, Robert Guy Syme, of Ashburton, was charged with having procured a dangerous drug.

The three charges, which, in the case of Sinclair, were that he did supply a dangerous drug to a person other than a licensed purchaser, were dated October 2, 1937, March 26, 1937, and February 19, 1938.

Mr A. W. Brown (Crown Solicitor at Christchurch) appeared for the Health Department, which brought the prosecutions.

Mr R. Kennedy appeared for Sinclair, and Mr L. A. Charles for Syme, and both defendants pleaded guilty.

Mr Brown said that Sinclair was a man of considerable experience. Syme was a veterinary surgeon, but was not licensed. He had been carrying on the business for some time. He had purchased tincture of opium, and there was no doubt that the drug was used for stock prescriptions.

Sinclair had kept a register, as required, and it was entered up, but he apparently did not take the trouble to check up whether Syme was a licensed man. There was no suggestion that there was anything underhand about the purchases. There was great difficulty in detecting unauthorised sales of drugs, and the question had to be closely watched. This was the first case of its kind for many years.

Mr Kennedy said that there were two men in Ashburton who were authorised to purchase drugs and did so, and the mistake on the part of Sinclair was a bona fide one. Even the Department, it appeared, was under the impression that Syme was a licensed veterinary surgeon.

Mr Charles said there was no question that the drugs were used for stock medicines. Syme was carrying on a business previously conducted by his father. The purchases had been made entirely in ignorance that an offence was being committed. Syme's application for a licence to purchase the drugs had now been filed. The case appeared to have been brought as a warning.

The Magistrate: Both parties should have known better. Sinclair should have been aware of the necessity of supplying this drug only to licensed persons, and Syme should have known the law. The facts of the particular case are not very serious. Sinclair was fined £1, with 10s costs, on one charge, and was ordered to pay 10s costs on each of the others.

Syme was similarly dealt with.