

tion. There are all sorts of examples of what I would say is misleading or dishonest advertising of some of these preparations. One of the most obvious examples is various preparations of aspirin, or acetylsalicylic acid. It may be presented in the same quantity, in the same constitution, with a different name as a new treatment for arthritis or even an old treatment for arthritis. Take the situation where a patient will treat himself without medical advice. He will go to the drugstore or to a distributor and ask for something for his arthritis. He may be given two or three different items, all of which claim to be for arthritis but which in fact are the same chemically. In other words, he may get four times as large a dose of the same medicine that any one of the tablets themselves would provide. In other words, I think it is a step in the right direction to state what the actual medications are.

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Television advertising of some of these patent medicines might also be worth mentioning. I am irritated sometimes when watching them. For example, you see a picture of a beautiful girl with a headache swallowing a pill, and within seconds a smile comes over her face and she feels just great. I do not think we can describe this kind of advertising in any way other than to say it is extremely deceptive. There is absolutely no physical way in which a headache tablet can relieve pain in a matter of seconds, as the advertisement portrays.

In the regulations to be published, I think we should consider the possibility of a regulation dealing with advertising of this kind. I appreciate you cannot sit and wait for 45 minutes to elapse before the girl in the ad feels better, but some indication should be given in the advertisement that for reasons of time and cost the whole thing is condensed into 60 seconds. Otherwise, I think a false impression is created. We all know that any medication taken by mouth does not reach its maximum effect until the passage of at least 45 minutes or an hour, and possibly even longer. That is why I think this kind of advertising should be corrected.

The most important thing to remember is that further information must be made available regarding the effectiveness of these various medications. There must be made available to anyone who requests it scientific information confirming any claims that may be made for the effectiveness of any drug. Information should also be given as to any side-effects or possible harm that may result. As a matter of fact, this information should be on the label so that people do not unknowingly use a preparation that may have harmful side-effects for them. This is particularly the case with people who may be allergic to certain constituents and who may have other adverse reactions to that medication.

Another situation where patent medicine advertising is rather misleading concerns the various potions, ointments and rubs on the market. An athlete may have a sore shoulder from pitching a baseball too vigorously, so he rubs some lotion on his shoulder. Immediately the pain goes away; or that is the impression created by television ads. We all know this is absolute nonsense. I, for one, have not been able to find any scientific evidence to substantiate beyond a shadow of doubt that the various compounds that are rubbed into the skin to relieve pain from arthritis,

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rheumatism or whatever have the slightest pain relieving effect, speaking from the pharmacological point of view.

Where such claims are made, the manufacturer should explain to the satisfaction of the scientific community the mechanism of action involved in producing the claimed effect, and this must be proven by clinical studies, rather than the evidence of someone who may have improved for one of two reasons, either because there was a psychological feeling that there was improvement because some treatment had been administered, or because there was improvement as a result of the effects of nature itself. For example, a painful muscle caused by the excessive exertion of that muscle will get better by itself within three or four days. Some patent medicines may say on the label that if they are rubbed in, within three or four days any pain will be cured. This sort of thing occurs with advertisements for rubs, lotions, and so on. We should inform the public, when this sort of thing happens, that they are victims of a snow job. The public should be informed on the label on the bottle that the medicine contained therein will or may improve the pain condition within three or four days, but that the pain will also go away by itself within the same period of time. Certainly that would be more honest and accurate as far as the public is concerned.

While I agree that the public is entitled to self-medication if that is what it wants—and I am not objecting to that—at the same time there must be accurate and honest information given about these products for self-medication. This is not the case now, and the minister gave us no assurance in his speech that it will be the case after the bill is passed and new regulations are brought in. We have been given no assurance that the public will not continue to be exposed to what in some cases amounts to a sham. I suggest we look seriously at this matter and take steps to correct the situation.

Perhaps I appear to be dwelling a little too much on drug advertising, but there is another aspect that I think is related here. We all know that prescription drugs are not advertised on the public media; such advertising is restricted to patent medicines. It seems to me that in due course these advertisements will have some kind of influence on the psychological attitudes of our young people, people of middle age and, indeed, the elderly, in regard to the value of nature itself in remedying minor ailments compared with the value of some pill or potion. It seems to me that the kind of virtually uncontrolled advertising that we see today is creating the attitude on the part of the public that there must be a pill or a potion for everything.

This sort of thing is destroying the idea that people used to have, that nature will take care of most of the minor ailments, that we do not need a pill or a crutch to lean on every time we have a little headache or a sore muscle from too much exertion, or every time we become a little worried about something. The net effect of advertising patent medicines year after year and decade after decade is to create a drug dependent society, a feeling in society that a drug must be administered immediately if there is some minor thing wrong with us that we do not like. This does a disservice to society and in the long run is harmful. I suggest we must consider the long-term effects of this sort of thing on our children and on society as a whole.