

Mr. ORLIKOW: You state at page 3 of your brief that doctors gain knowledge in respect of various drugs by reference to publications such as the British Pharmacopoeia and Vademecum International. I am not being critical of doctors or of drug manufacturers at the moment but is it not a fact that a great amount of the information which a busy doctor has in respect of new drugs particularly comes from dealers who have time to spend waiting to see the doctor to provide him with this information about a new product? If that is the case is that not one of the reasons why many individuals prefer to use or recommend well known brand products?

Mr. WIGHTMAN: At page 10 I think there is mention of the influence of prescribing habits of the doctors as far as drugs are concerned. I think this is true. It states there the drug firms, which includes the detail men, advertising material and the other promotional methods and, in that setting, this would seem to produce 25 per cent of the direction in respect of prescribing. So far as the doctors are concerned, I think it is true that the detail men do a lot to acquaint doctors with new products and how to use them. In many instances I think the information which they give is fairly reliable. However, it is not the only source and I would hesitate to say that it is the main source.

Mr. ORLIKOW: I did not say it was the main source. However, the detail men are not often likely to tell you that there are other companies making the same product and that perhaps the other company is selling it at a lower price than their company. Is that not correct?

Mr. WIGHTMAN: Yes.

Mr. ORLIKOW: That would be expecting too much.

Mr. WIGHTMAN: Usually he is trying to interest you in something which no other company has made to date.

Mr. ORLIKOW: But is it not true that a very large percentage of the prescription dollar which the consumer is paying is paid in respect of a relatively small number of products, such as antibiotics, and there is a good deal of overlap? Is it not true that the same or similar product is made by half a dozen companies and as a result, there is a terrific amount of competition between companies?

Mr. WIGHTMAN: Yes.

Mr. ORLIKOW: That is, there is this competition to get the doctor to prescribe their product rather than someone else's?

Mr. WIGHTMAN: I think this is true. There are large areas of overlap in respect of commonly used drugs. The more popular the drug is the more widespread is its use and the more temptation there is to produce a new version of it or new methods of producing it. But, this would not be worth while in respect of other drugs.

Mr. ORLIKOW: Page 3 sets out where the doctor obtains his information, and I am wondering if it is too early to say whether the new regulations in respect of distribution of drug samples, which were worked out last year, have had any appreciable effect on the reduction of the almost indiscriminate flooding of doctors' offices with drug samples by drug companies.

Mr. WIGHTMAN: In my case, it certainly has. I do not know what has been Dr. McNeil's experience.

Mr. MACKASEY: Mr. Chairman, I object to those generalities used by Mr. Orlikow. He referred to the indiscriminate flooding of doctors' offices. I, for one, do not know whether there is or is not, and I do not want to let this remark go unchallenged into the record without first knowing.

I think Mr. Orlikow could phrase his question in a more objective manner. Now, I have no axe to grind in this respect and, I presume, Mr. Orlikow has not. But, I do take objection to this type of flowery phrasing in the beginning of