

We have no panacea for the ills of pharmacy, but from the viewpoint of the medical profession the most urgent needs are—

- (a) to provide a means of assuring the doctor that his prescription does in fact contain the stated type and quantity of active drug, even if the generic name is used and no manufacturer specified, and
- (b) to provide information on new drugs relating to an objective appraisal of their efficacy and toxicity by an unbiased body of experts before they are released for general use.

We welcome the recent announcement that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has requested the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada to appoint an ad hoc committee to study the existing procedure whereby new pharmaceutical products are evaluated before receiving approval for marketing in Canada.

It is our belief that an important shortcoming in this respect is the lack of facilities and qualified personnel to carry out adequate pre-marketing evaluation of new drugs at the clinical level, that is an assessment of their effects on humans. The difficulties involved in providing for reliable, properly controlled, clinical trials of new pharmaceuticals are many and complex. The collaboration of the appropriate agencies of government, the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry, and the professions of pharmacy and medicine will be required to devise a satisfactory solution to this problem.

Reference has been made to the good work being carried out by the Food and Drug Directorate, but these precise functions are not now being assumed. It is suggested and recommended that the Food and Drugs Act be amended to provide the authority for the expansion of the work of the directorate to encompass these two functions initially. The necessary finances, facilities and personnel would, of course, require to be provided, but it is felt that the additional expenditure would be modest when the objective is to amplify the existing services of the directorate rather than to establish a new organization. It is our view that the proposed information service would command the ready cooperation of Canadian talent in pharmacy and pharmacology, in research and clinical investigation and in medicine.

The cost of drugs supplied to patients in hospital is lower than the price which applies to drugs purchased in retail pharmacies. Part of the saving is a consequence of bulk purchasing, but another important factor is that federal, provincial and municipal sales taxes are not applied to such purchases by hospitals. As an immediate step to reduce the cost of drugs obtained on prescription it is proposed that this royal commission recommend to the competent federal authority that the 11% federal sales tax on prescribed drugs be eliminated.

Reference is made above to the fact that the then minister of national health and welfare had requested the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada to appoint a committee to "examine critically and objectively our present procedures for dealing with new drugs, the requirements of the regulations and any other matters that in the opinion of the committee are relative to this issue."

The Committee on Pharmacy of the C.M.A. presented its views to the Royal College Committee and examined very carefully the findings and recommendations of the committee when they were tabled in the House of Commons in January 1963. Although the chairman of that committee, Dr. F. S.