

information about it, the method of manufacture, proposed dosage and claims as to its effects, tests as to its safety and other particulars have been submitted to the minister. When one considers the very large number of new pharmaceutical preparations which are being developed in this country and abroad and which seek entry to the Canadian market, it is praiseworthy that assessment for safety, if not for therapeutic effectiveness, is carried out as thoroughly and as promptly as it is, despite the fact that not all batches are tested.

The Canadian Medical Association is represented on the Drug Advisory Committee and the Prescription Drugs Sub-Committee, both of which act to ensure that drugs licensed for sale in this country are of a high standard and that drugs unsuitable for self-medication are available only on a doctor's prescription. The operation of one central and five regional laboratories serves to promote safety in foods, drugs and cosmetics, and the Directorate exercises control over the claims made for medicines advertised to the public. Over sixty poison control centres located in hospitals in all parts of the country depend on information supplied through the Food and Drug Directorate. The most recent 1961 amendment to the Food and Drug Regulations establishes a new class of controlled drugs to cover the amphetamines, the barbiturates and methamphetamines. These commonly used and commonly abused drugs are now available only under licence and on prescription.

The Narcotic Control Division administers the Narcotic Control Act, which in 1961 was extensively amended to provide more stringent penalties for illicit trafficking in narcotics and to control the legal distribution through licensed dealers, pharmacists and practitioners. The medical profession is directly involved in the provision to their patients of both controlled drugs and narcotics and although little more than six months have elapsed since the new regulations in both fields became effective it is our impression they are operating well with the full co-operation of practising physicians.

The functions of the Food and Drug Directorate also extend to the supervision of the labelling of proprietary medicines offered for sale and the advertising of such remedies for self-medication. Constant vigilance must be maintained to prevent misleading claims being made in the advertising through a wide range of media.

The Canadian Medical Association is conscious of the fact that a good deal of confusing evidence on pharmacy, the price of drugs, pharmaceutical promotion, prepaid drug plans, generic names and other aspects of a highly technical field is being debated publicly. This royal commission has received from a variety of sources proposals which vary from the establishment of a federal agency to examine the revenue-cost position of individual drugs, to the provision out of public funds of drugs for patients suffering from chronic disabilities. Canadian doctors and their patients are the beneficiaries of the remarkable advances which have been made in pharmacology and it may be said with some justification that new products have revolutionized the treatment of many diseases.

We are interested in providing for our patients at the lowest possible cost these efficacious new remedies, but we are equally concerned that we may be able to prescribe with confidence, knowing that quality and safety have been checked at every stage of the manufacturing process. The reputation of Canadian pharmaceutical manufacturers and the international organizations which they represent is high in this respect, and this very important consideration has been submerged in the attacks to which the industry has been subjected.