

APPENDIX "C"

STATEMENT ON THE BRIEF OF
THE CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

One has the right to expect that a brief purporting to present the view of Canadian consumers will approach its subject in an objective and well-informed manner. This brief, however, appears rather to plead a predetermined case, based on the recommendations of the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission and the Hall Commission, even though several of these recommendations run counter to the laudable concern of the CAC for better assurance of drug quality.

Throughout the brief there is a tendency to prejudge the issue by the use of pejorative terms. For instance:

1. "The consumer is the captive in this chain of events." (Minutes 1171) This seems to mean that the consumer buys the drug his doctor prescribes.

2. "...companies spend more to mis-inform than to inform the physicians." (Minutes 1177) This is a grotesque overstatement of any position.

3. "The physician is bombarded daily with propaganda from pharmaceutical houses." (Minutes 1178) Another considerable over-statement. Much of the six or seven pieces of mail the physician receives per business day has an advertising content, but much of it, too, is essential scientific information.

4. "...rivalry of competition takes the form of promotional gimmicks and selling campaigns and minor product variations" (Minutes 1185) This, again, is a highly coloured and unbalanced description of the competition by product innovation which has resulted in the present availability of a large number of therapeutically effective drugs.

5. Referring to savings from the abolition of the sales tax: "...their being passed on to him (the consumer) hinges on the effectiveness of competition in the drug industry." In view of the declaration of numerous companies that they would pass on these savings in their own prices, this is an unwarranted slur on the ethics of the industry.

In addition, there are throughout the brief a number of technical misstatements and unbased assumptions.

1. "The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada...claims that the drugs made or distributed by these firms (independent manufacturers) are of inferior quality." (Minutes 1171)

PMAC does not claim anything of the sort. But it has shown, through the evidence of scientific experts, that there is a real risk of lack of therapeutic equivalency in the products of some non-research based companies. (See also Appendix "B".)

2. "Hospitals pay less for drugs than do most pharmacists." (Minutes 1174) This is true for some products of some companies; it is not a general situation.