

Dr. CROUT. You are correct. There are some special societies that give tests that are of a general and broad nature, not related to any particular course or magazine article or what have you, which are in the nature of a broad review—they give those. They are excellent. They are taken on a voluntary basis. That is correct. That sort of test is something different from what we are talking about this morning.

Mr. GORDON. As I understand it, some specialties, some organizations like the American Medical Association gives a certain number of credits if you go to a medical convention; is that correct?

Dr. CROUT. That is correct.

Mr. GORDON. Suppose you go to a convention and you do not even know what is said. Instead, you spend your time in the barroom or you are outside in a neighboring poolroom. Do you still get credits for that?

Dr. CROUT. One can falsely certify to the AMA, I suppose, that he is at scientific parts of the meeting.

Mr. GORDON. As I understand it, also, there are credits given for reading certain articles in some throwaway magazines.

Dr. CROUT. That is correct.

Mr. GORDON. What assurance is there that the person really read the article?

Dr. CROUT. This is an honor system.

Senator NELSON. Perhaps you should be given more credit for not reading it! Go ahead.

Dr. CROUT. To understand the importance of postgraduate education to the physician's use of drugs, one must appreciate how rapidly information on drugs changes. Ninety percent of prescriptions written today are for drugs which were not even on the market a generation ago. New information about the uses and potential adverse effects of drugs appears almost continuously. Since the professional career of the average physician spans 30 to 40 years, it is evident that most of what he learns about new drugs occurs after he completes his formal medical training.

It thus is not surprising that the drug industry is vitally interested in the educational materials the practicing physician receives. In view of the great financial resources available to the industry it should also not be surprising that it has come to support a large and growing proportion of such educational materials.

It has long been recognized that the industry-supported detail man is an important and influential source of information on drugs for the practicing physician. Drug labeling and drug advertising, which are closely regulated by FDA, also provide information. It is less well recognized, however, that much of the written and audiovisual teaching material supplied to the physician on all medical subjects throughout his professional career is also supported by the pharmaceutical industry. This includes the vast majority of medical magazines which fill his mailbox, the clinical symposia that discuss specific drugs or general approaches to therapeutics, the audiovisual teaching systems he studies in his spare time, the films and closed-circuit TV tapes he sees in his hospital conferences, and even the scientific exhibits and presentations by panels of experts he en-