

STATEMENT OF EARL J. SCHERAGO, PRESIDENT, SCHERAGO ASSOCIATES, INC.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting me here today, to alert you to a problem which is jeopardizing the scientific and technical capabilities of our nation. It is a threat which if not aborted, could well produce a serious delay in the solving of many medical and scientific problems. Dr. George Crout of the Food and Drug Administration, in his recent testimony before this committee, touched on the problems Controlled Circulation (Throw Away) publications have generated in the medical field. Dr. Crout talked mainly about the intellectual problems presented by pharmaceutical industry dominated post graduate education for medical doctors. I would like to discuss with you today, the financial impact of Throw Away Journals, not only upon the medical profession but the entire scientific research community as well.

Before I begin, however, I would like to tell you what our firm does so that you will have a better understanding of how we fit into the picture. Scherago Associates has for the past 20 years served as a publisher's representative for scientific and medical societies. In essence, this involves the solicitation of advertising for placement in the journals published by non-profit societies. As a scientist, I have long recognized that Scientific Societies need revenue other than membership dues in order to publish their journals. Most scientific societies do not have their own sales staff because they prefer not to be involved in the commercial aspects of publishing. Because of this, they leave such details to us. In the market place, we compete with the sales staffs of the Throw Away Magazines, published by profit making organizations, who have unlimited staffs and resources at their command.

Because of our involvement with the sale or loss of sales in Society Journals, we are in the best position to evaluate the impact of Throw Aways on Society publishing programs. Before proceeding further with my discussion, I think it necessary to define here, the meaning of peer review, as it applies to publishing and recap briefly the history of Scientific Societies and Publishing in the U.S. From the beginning of Scientific Research Reporting, the accepted method of recording, has been through Peer Review Scientific Journals. Each area of scientific specialty has its own Journal and serves as a means of communication with other scientists in the same field. These scientists of like interest often band together into groups which ultimately grow into scientific societies. These societies range in size from a few members to the 140,000 constituency of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Early in the history of organized science, it became apparent that a system of assuring the authenticity of the scientific work appearing in Society Journals was essential, for the scientific community was not without its share of charlatans. Since each piece of research in a given area served as a basis for further work in the same field, an erroneous piece of information could cause untold damage to the whole field. To protect themselves, scientists established the Peer Review Doctrine. In its simplest form, the doctrine says that no piece of scientific research can be considered valid unless it has been reviewed by at least two recognized authorities in the field of science involved. Furthermore, these reviewers can have no financial or academic involvement in the work reviewed and in most cases are to remain unknown to the performer of the work. Through the years, scientists have tenaciously stuck to the Peer Review System of Journal Editing.

The tremendous strides in science and medicine of the last hundred years, would not have been possible without strict adherence to Peer Review and the existence of Society Journals as a means of communicating Peer Reviewed information to other scientists. I would like to emphasize here that once a piece of scientific work is published in a Peer Review Journal, it becomes forever a part of the archives of Science. Consequently, Peer Review or Society Journals are often referred to as archival or scholarly journals. Virtually all archival journals are published by non-profit societies. That is because commercial publishing firms have found that it is very difficult to make a profit with Peer Review Journals. They have turned to other ways of profiteering from the scientific communities, which I shall discuss later.

It is my sad duty to inform this committee that Peer Review Journals as a group, are in serious financial difficulty. So much so, in fact that more and more meetings are being held by Society Journal editors to discuss the problem. One