

disseminated, not only more widely to physicians and to the general public. The public became aware of the problem just as they have with oral contraceptives thanks to public hearings. It is not a matter just of disseminating the information to the profession, but the general public must also be made more aware of the possible hazard. The way the drugs are promoted in Latin America, the physicians and the pharmacists are not adequately informed of the possible adverse effects of the drugs which Dr. Silverman has described.

Dr. SILVERMAN. In some countries, Mr. Chairman, we found that no one is allowed to practice as a pharmacist unless he has considerable advanced training. In some cases, this could be comparable to training in pharmacy in the United States. In other countries, the requirements are so loose that an individual can become a licensed pharmacist providing he has served 5 years as an assistant to a pharmacist and can show that he is of good moral character. He is not required to take any examination of any kind.

I can cite one instance which always will be memorable to us. We were in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, and for some reason—we needed some over-the-counter drug—we went into what is the largest pharmacy in the country. There was a long counter with a great many people in white jackets waiting on the customers. I stood in line behind one nice little old lady. If I had to make a curb-stone diagnosis, I would probably say that she was suffering from a severe thyroid disease. She was nervous, tense, and jittery, and very thin. When she came up to the man to wait on her, she reached into her dress and brought out a scrap of paper—it was not a prescription; it was a piece of butcher paper, I think, on which she had written something recommended by somebody or other—and she asked for a drug called Largactil, which is one of the trade names for a very effective, very potent tranquilizer used in the control of psychosis.

The pharmacist's assistant said, if my translation was right, that he had something much better. I watched him carefully. He did not look at any book, he did not consult with any of his colleagues. He went to a shelf behind him, and he brought down a bottle of one of the more potent antithyroid drugs. It is widely used, very effective, but it has known hazards. Ordinarily, physicians in the United States would not prescribe a drug like this unless they had subjected the patient to thorough diagnostic studies. Some physicians will even hospitalize their patients before they start them on this drug. But in this case, the clerk just counted out the prerequisite number of tablets, collected the proper number of colones from the lady, who walked out. And we watched this in amazement. After we got out of the store, my colleague and I still cannot agree whether this assistant was aged 14 or 13 or 12. I know he had not begun to shave yet.

Senator BEALL. Well the question I have is, whose fault is that?

Dr. SILVERMAN. I think this fault has to be shared.

Senator BEALL. By whom?

Dr. SILVERMAN. Partly by the drug industry, partly for not making available more accurate information to physicians and pharmacists.

Senator BEALL. Well, wait a minute. I can understand a situation of a physician giving a drug to an individual, and he might not have accurate information. But here you have a case of a minor working