

Dr. WEGMAN. I might add to that, Milton. You may not know, but the foundation that I am on, the Pan American Health and Education Foundation, is underwriting the reprinting of the Spanish version of The Medical Letter, "Carta Médica," and is distributing it to every country in Latin America which wants it, at no cost to the government. Several countries are distributing "Carta Médica" widely, although, for cost reasons some of the advantage of The Medical Letter is lost. A great beauty of The Medical Letter is that it is a 4-page leaflet that comes every 2 weeks and can be read with speed. For reasons of economy in the Spanish reproduction, most governments distribute six issues at once, every quarter, which makes it less likely to be read and assimilated.

Mr. SOMMER. But is there any discussion in the foundation that you were referring to that are doing the PDR in Spanish? It seems to me that that ought to be a step in the right direction in getting the data distributed throughout Latin America.

Dr. LEE. PDR, you know, is a book of drug advertisements, it is paid advertising.

Mr. SOMMER. But Dr. Silverman, I think, referred to it as meeting the FDA standards.

Dr. LEE. Yes.

It contains a limited number of drugs, and only the drugs that the drug companies want are included in the PDR.

Dr. WEGMAN. Let me point out another problem with translation; it would have to be an adaptation because drug names are different in Latin America. A drug identified by one name here goes under a completely different name in Latin America. For example, in one of the communications that was sent to the countries by WHO some years ago, the list of synonyms for chloramphenicol would knock your eye out. I have it right handy here, I think. There are at least 50 or 60 different synonyms for chloramphenicol sold in different countries.

Dr. LEE. We have been trying for 10 years to get a drug compendium in the United States that would replace the PDR. I think if we could do that or if a similar document could be produced for the Latin American countries, a practical, useful compendium that could essentially replace the PDR in the physician's office, which is where it is found in the United States and where it is used every day by physicians as they write prescriptions, would be an excellent idea.

Senator BEALL. Senator Nelson has a bill in to provide for a compendium.

Dr. LEE. Yes, he does.

And if a comparable action could be taken through, let us say the Pan American Health Organization, with some stimulus from the United States to do that, I think that might be very helpful.

Mr. GORDON. The problem of multiplicity of names, of course, was dramatized by the thalidomide case, if you will recall. We had testimony by Dr. Helen Taussig that even after the alarm went out about thalidomide throughout the world, children were still being born in Brazil and other countries with defective limbs because when they were told about thalidomide they went to their medicine cabinets and saw Kevadon, Contergan, Profamil, Slip, Sedalis, and perhaps more than 80 other names. It was just impossible to take them off the market.

I have one question for Dr. Wegman. I understand that you went to Cuba not too long ago.