

Senator WEICKER. In other words, the point I am making here I think there is a local grocery store in Washington that makes the point that the best customer is an educated consumer. We are not talking about the public at large. The real consumer is the physician himself.

Dr. FURMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator WEICKER. Certainly, nobody can ascribe a lack of education to that particular individual as far as this product is concerned. If the product does not work, it seems to me that it would not be prescribed.

We are not talking about a drug that might have just burst on the market in a fit of temporary popularity. We are talking about something on the marketplace for 21 years. Now, if it is no good, why do doctors go ahead and recommend it? I do not understand this, unless there is some sort of a tie-in between the industry and the doctor's prescriptions, and that is illegal. If there is, I want to hear about that.

Dr. FURMAN. I think you put your finger on the answer regarding efficacy. Propoxyphene is out there and it works, and it has enjoyed great usefulness and popularity for more than two decades.

The FDA did not have to ban blood-letting. Somebody last week testified that propoxyphene was essentially a nostrum like ground ram's horn and this sort of nonsense. These nostrums are not perceived as effective by the physician indefinitely. Their patients are sick; and I think, Senator Weicker, you are correct, that this is a useful drug; that the physician is not prescribing it willy-nilly. He is using it. He gets the report from his patient that it works, and he is content it is safe and effective; and that is the reason the drug has been successful for more than two decades.

Senator WEICKER. I would imagine that probably Darvon's days are numbered, not in the sense of what Government can or cannot do to it, but in the sense that people are seeking to discover a better product in the sense of what it can do.

Dr. FURMAN. We, ourselves, will, I hope, come out with a better product; but over the last two decades, as I think Dr. Beaver pointed out, nobody has come up with a better type of centrally acting analgesic.

Senator WEICKER. I gather, to emphasize what you are saying, that you are not claiming that propoxyphene is better than aspirin in all cases.

Dr. FURMAN. No.

Senator WEICKER. I just wanted to make that point. I am very much for consumers as my voting record indicates. However, I think it is very important that the picture be made clear as to what is involved and who is involved in this particular instance, so we do not perceive this to be another case of the corporate world ripping off the man on the street.

There are other factors involved here and a filtering process that makes this situation considerably different than just the normal situation of the consumer and the corporate product.

Dr. FURMAN. I appreciate your comments.

Senator HATCH. On page 3 of Dr. Wolfe's testimony there is a reference to a Danish study concluding Darvon has a small margin