

STATEMENT OF DR. SOLOMON GARB, DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI MEDICAL SCHOOL, COLUMBIA, MO.

Dr. GARB. No, that would be fine, sir.

Senator NELSON. If you will speak into the microphone so we can hear you, go ahead and proceed.

Dr. GARB. Do you want my biographical sketch, sir?

Senator NELSON. We have a detailed biographical sketch, but we should be pleased if you would give us a brief résumé of your professional background.

Dr. GARB. All right, sir. I received my M.D. degree from Cornell University Medical School approximately 24 years ago. I have had an internship, residency, military experience as a battalion surgeon, and a certain degree of clinical experience testing drugs in various medical centers. I have been a full-time teacher and researcher in pharmacology and clinical pharmacology since approximately 1950. I taught on the staff of Cornell Medical School, then Albany Medical School, and I am currently professor of pharmacology and associate professor of community health at the University of Missouri Medical Center. I am also clinical pharmacologist for the University of Missouri Medical Center and I am a consultant to the AMA Council on Drugs.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Doctor.

Dr. GARB. It is an honor to be invited to testify before this subcommittee, and I hope that the information which I am able to present will help you in your deliberations.

The key point which I would like to emphasize is that the names of drugs are unnecessarily confusing. They are confusing not only to the layman, but to the physician as well. Furthermore, I believe that the existing confusion plays a major role in preventing the operation of the usual American marketplace checks and balances. As a result, many drug prices are excessively high. The point that I want to make here is that I don't feel that drug prices are excessively high simply because somebody is out to make a killing with them. I think that the economic structure of the industry tends toward high drug prices, and this is a point which I think will become clear as we go along.

There are several kinds of drug names for us to consider. They include: chemical, official, generic, USAN, brand, and private product names. And each drug can have one or more of each of these kinds of names.

The chemical name is a long, complex affair which identifies the specific chemical structure of the drug molecule. Fortunately, it is used only by chemists, and we need not consider it further.

The words official and generic are often used interchangeably in relation to drug names. The word "generic," is a poor one in this context, and hopefully, the term "official" will take its place. As commonly used, the term "official" and "generic" refer to names of drugs which can be used by any manufacturer, and which serve to identify the drug and distinguish it from others. There are, however, some differences in the meanings of generic and official. At one time the word "official" referred to a name approved by the U.S. Pharmacopeia. Today, it