Dr. GARB. Seven years ago I asked why we could not have the same safeguards for drugs that we have for dog food. Thus far, I have not received a satisfactory reply. Some drug company officers with whom I have discussed this problem have told me that inspecting drugs is much more complex and expensive than inspecting dog food. I am sure they are right. However, many companies today say that they have superior quality control inspections of their products.

If a drug company can make such inspections, why can't the U.S. Government?

I have also been told that the cost of continuous inspection would be astronomical. I cannot see why. Most drugs which are produced in this country today are being inspected by inspectors hired and paid by the manufacturers, and the costs are included in the price of the drugs. If we had continuous Government inspection, the costs should not increase, although they might come from a different pocket. But in the long run, the cost of inspection would still be paid by the person who uses the drugs.

I am convinced that there is no place for any kind of substandard drugs, no matter how they are named, anywhere in America, and I hope that prompt steps will be taken to eliminate this problem. I think that we ought not have any patients harmed by substandard drugs, and I think we ought not have any patients or any doctors with any misgivings or anxieties about whether the drug they are getting is a pure, potent, wholesome drug or not. When we sit down to eat some meat, we do not start to worry about whether the meat is wholesome or not. If it has been inspected, we are sure it is.

I think we ought to have the same safeguard for drugs. Indeed, we ought to have more safeguards for drugs.

The patient who is sick is a worried person. He ought not have the added worry about whether the drug he is getting is pure, wholesome, potent, and effective. He ought to be sure of it, and it seems to me that inspection, continuous Government inspection, the same kind that we have for dog food is the sort of thing that we need.

I have also been told that preparations of the same drug may differ in more than 20 ways, and that the physician is the person who can best judge which preparation is best for his patient. There is an element of truth in this assertion, but it is greatly exaggerated. If a physician prescribes digitalis leaf, it is advisable not to change brands except by plan. This is one of the areas in which there is an element of truth.

Also, about 10 years ago, one manufacturer, Wyeth, marketed a preparation of Salk polio vaccine which had no detectable penicillin in it. Other preparations of the vaccine contained penicillin, and therefore were dangerous for patients with a penicillin allergy. Under those circumstances, it is perfectly proper for the doctor to prescribe a particular manufacturer's product, and it is conceivable that such situations could arise again.

Senator HATFIELD. Senator Nelson, on this point that you are making now relating to the need for continuous inspection, and you use the corollary in the food field of dog food or food for human consumption, will this get to the problem of potency and efficacy, or will this be more in the line of purity and safety?

Dr. GARB. Purity, wholesomeness, and cleanliness.