

Based on our studies and our conclusions regarding rationality and irrationality of prescribing, it could well be that if we put 400 or 600 drugs in this volume I, that we would be including a large number of drugs that were being prescribed not in a rational fashion. At the same time we might be describing the best drugs, the most appropriate drugs in the other, little used volume. This was a point that I really didn't make clear in my earlier statement as to why we believe that all drugs should be listed generically and not in relation to frequency of use. I think it was implicit in what you were saying and it is a point that needs to be emphasized.

Senator NELSON. On the problem of volume size, I guess in any event you could resolve it if it were too bulky, you could still have two or three volumes.

Dr. LEE. Surely you could, but it shouldn't be on the basis of frequency of prescribing.

Senator NELSON. Yes.

Dr. LEE. There was one other point while we are on this subject. In discussing the guidelines for physicians on drug therapy, I would just like to make a little clarifying point on that. One of the examples in the United States of such material is the Medical Letter. In Great Britain the Government publishes a Prescribers Journal.

I don't know if you have seen this. But it is a Government publication. The authors of these articles are totally independent of the Government. The journal includes excellent summary information on drugs for particular disease conditions. It is the sort of thing that I had in mind in my testimony, but in going over it quickly I did not emphasize this point.

Senator NELSON. This publication, as I understand it, is circulated in Great Britain, New Zealand, and Australia; did you say that in your testimony?

Dr. LEE. No; I didn't say that in the testimony. That is why I wanted to make the point. It is in the report, but it is not in my statement.

Senator NELSON. I saw it in the report.

Dr. LEE. That is right.

Senator NELSON. Has this publication received some public funds for support?

Dr. LEE. This is a Government publication.

Senator NELSON. It is a Government publication?

Dr. LEE. Yes, sir. It goes to the physicians without charge. In this country, a physician can subscribe to Medical Letter, but the number is rather small, perhaps 10,000 to 20,000 physicians.

Senator NELSON. We had testimony on that. I thought it was 10 out of some 200,000.

Dr. LEE. Yes.

Senator NELSON. Is this also in the nature of a compendium?

Dr. LEE. No. The Medical Letter and Prescribers Journal are quite different. They are what I call a guide to rational prescribing.

Senator NELSON. This is just a continuous flow of current information to the physicians; is that right?

Dr. LEE. Correct; by people who are expert in their particular field. It is very useful, but it is not readily available in this country.