

quite reluctant to be very critical of the one who is supplying the money that is important to the publication?

Dr. ALFANO. I do not believe so. Not in medicine, sir. You can probably find it in other types of advertising, but in medicine, if there is a just criticism of the drug company or the entire industry, that criticism will be made regardless of the number of advertisers in the journal. Because this industry that is limited to 350,000 doctors; therefore, the profession is not a captive of the individual drug companies or the industry. If there is a valid justified criticism, I believe every medical journal and every society would make it known and would not hesitate because they have advertising or money coming in because of ads in their particular journal.

I would never be afraid to put anything in the journal criticizing the drug industry. If I have something that is valid, I will put it in.

Senator NELSON. Well, is it not just human nature, the nature of human beings, whether it is medical publication or any other, that if an important source of money is coming from a particular place, it creates a potential bias. It could be conscious or unconscious.

I read some of these publications. I am not referring to yours—I have not read it, so I do not direct this at you at all. But I read quite a few of the publications that rely heavily upon drug company advertising. Sometimes I cannot quite identify the hearing they are talking about because of the bias they put into the stories. Actually they are these hearings. If you just look at them regularly, you will find a lot of bias in favor of the company. I suppose that is just natural.

If that publication is critical and tough on an advertiser, who they think is doing something wrong, that advertiser is likely not to spend any money with them. I do not see how that is avoidable.

So it just seems to me that medical journals and medical publications are compromised by the substantial amount of money that they rely upon from an industry which needs independent critical evaluation from the medical profession all the time. I do not see how you avoid that.

Dr. ALFANO. Well, I believe the checks and balances—the American individual is critical. They are critical individuals. If you have an association with a publication that tries to put something over on its membership, that publication, that society will hear about it, because they have hundreds of thousands of members who are reading. They will not stand for something which they feel is not correct or proper. I do not think they can put something over on the members is what I am saying, because of money from advertising.

Senator NELSON. There is no doubt in my mind that as professions go, I am biased toward the medical profession. I was raised in a family with lots of doctors. I think there is not any profession that has a higher percentage of conscientious people in it. I think it probably has more conscientious people than any other profession because of the nature of the person who is inclined to select that profession in order to take care of the health of someone else. But that does not mean they are all perfect. We all know that. I happen to be a lawyer, but I think there is more dedication, a higher percentage of the people who are really dedicated, in the medical profession, doing good for other people, than there is in my profession, though we have a substantial number of highly dedicated people, too.