

generic or brand name. Several years ago I was the recipient of streptomycin when it was in the guinea-pig stage, as a part of World War II, and also lived on streptomycin and Dicumarol for quite a while and became a great believer in drugs and the wonders they perform.

I had a letter last week asking me whether I was a generic or brand-name Senator, and I have not decided, yet, which; so I have not answered the letter. But it poses a problem with us, of course. There is a feeling, as you know, Dr. Annis, from your present and past capacity, among some members of the public that there is a sort of conspiracy or unholy alliance between the AMA and the pharmaceutical industry. This is a matter of concern to all of us. I do not know if you can answer that generally, but I would appreciate your comment. I know it is ground that has been gone over time and time again, but not in my presence. So if you could just comment on that, then I have two or three questions I would like to ask.

Dr. ANNIS. I know of no conspiracy. If you will look at the deliberations of our council on drugs, and their evaluation of drugs, and how they have spoken out against drugs that have had bad side effects, the abuse of drugs, the overuse of dangerous drugs, constantly reminding physicians, you would see no such conspiracy exists.

I have been raised in the school of therapeutic nihilism. I do not believe in drugs. The next moment, I say they are tremendous. I lean on them.

My point is that I refuse, and over the years have refused, to let my patients tell me when they should get a pill or a shot or something else. All drugs have a potential for harm. All drugs are dangerous. The medical profession as a whole has spoken out repeatedly on this. Drugs, whether they are aspirin or any of the other more potent drugs of today, all have a real potential for harm.

Aspirin has been a great boon. It is a great drug. But it still kills children every year.

Penicillin has changed the whole complexion of medical practice, since my early years of practice. Yet penicillin kills people every year.

There is no such thing as a truly safe drug. They all have potential danger. I think this is the message that the medical profession has continued to spread. We have no alliance with the industry.

If you think so, I would welcome you to come to some of the meetings of our house of delegates to hear physicians discuss these contributions to medicine, absolutely milestones in our progress, and yet, like so many great things, that also carries along with it built-in hazards that are very serious.

Had we such an alliance with the pharmaceutical industry, I am sure we would not have carried the thousands and thousands of pages of critical and analytical discussion on drugs that should be eliminated, drugs that are dangerous, drugs with a serious potential, and we would not have constantly advised physicians to carefully evaluate the therapeutic use and the necessity for their use before prescribing any drug.

Senator DOLE. Does a generic prescription automatically assure that the patient is going to save money?

Dr. ANNIS. No; there is no automatic assurance that that is the case. A generic prescription leaves to the pharmacist the decision as