

Our next witness is Mr. Bernard Barber, professor and chairman of the Department of Sociology, Barnard College, Columbia University. Professor Barber is also a member of the Drug Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences.

Professor Barber, we are very pleased to have you here this morning. You may present your statement in any way you desire.

**STATEMENT OF BERNARD BARBER, PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN,
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, BARNARD COLLEGE, COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY**

Mr. BARBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been a close student of the printed proceedings of these hearings and I am pleased to be here to make a contribution myself today.

I have been asked to "discuss the sociological aspects of psychotropic drug use." I would like to do so by talking to three separate but inter-related problems. First, I want to answer the question which is often raised, indeed is often answered in the affirmative. Is this a "drugged society"? Second, I want to say something about what I consider the desirable social policy with regard to abuse of the psychotropic drugs. And, finally, I want to describe why I think it is true that doctors may be overprescribing tranquilizers. If my description rings true, it may be possible for some doctors to cut down on the prescription of these drugs.

I should make it clear, before proceeding, that I am trying to be as brief as possible about these three problems in this prepared statement. I am assuming that your questions will lead to any amplification and clarification of my remarks wherever that is desirable.

Is this a "drugged society"?

Affirmations that the United States is a "drugged society" rest on an interpretation of what is an undoubted fact, the very widespread and very large recent increase in the use of both the major and the minor tranquilizers. Pilot studies of tranquilizer use, not based on nationally representative samples but probably pretty representative nonetheless, show that as many as one in four adults have used tranquilizers within any preceding 12 months and that as many as one adult in every two has used them at some time in the recent past.

If I may interpolate, I am using data from other sources than those referred to by Dr. Levine. I am very much impressed with the way in which the excellent research which they are doing now simply bears out the patterns which have been reported up to now.

The final report of the Task Force on Prescription Drugs, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, indicates that in 1966 prescriptions for tranquilizers were the second most frequent category of all prescriptions, with cardiovascular preparations first, and diuretics, sedatives, and antibiotics in third, fourth, and fifth places.

I do not agree with those who infer from this large use of tranquilizers that America has become a drugged society; that is, a society that is sinking into passivity, escapism, and the hedonistic pursuit of exotic experiences of mood and mind. It is my impression—and I venture to offer you impressions only because nothing better is available to any of us yet, including those who are affirming that this is a drugged