

COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

(Present Status of Competition in the Pharmaceutical Industry)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1969

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MONOPOLY OF THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:40 a.m., in room 318, Old Senate Office Building, Senator Gaylord Nelson (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Nelson and McIntyre.

Also present: Chester H. Smith, staff director and general counsel; Benjamin Gordon, staff economist; Elaine C. Dye, clerical assistant; and James P. Duffy III, minority counsel.

Senator NELSON. The hearing of the Monopoly Subcommittee will come to order.

On December 22, I released to the press a statement which explained the reasons for studying the oral contraceptives, and I shall place it into the hearing record at this point.

(Statement follows:)

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senator Gaylord Nelson has scheduled hearings to explore the question whether users of birth control pills are being adequately informed concerning the pill's known health hazards.

"It is important," Nelson said, "that women be informed about all aspects of the use of the pill so that they are able to make an intelligent, personal decision about their use."

The Wisconsin Democrat will open hearings on Jan. 14 by the Monopoly Subcommittee of the Senate Small Business Committee. Nelson is Chairman of the Subcommittee.

He said the list of witnesses for the hearings was still being drawn up and would be announced at a later date.

Nelson said oral contraceptives are now being used by 8.5 million women in the United States and 10 million elsewhere, not counting the millions of other women who once used the birth control pill but have stopped for some reason.

British studies of the pill, he added, report that 1 in every 2,000 who take the pill suffer blood clots serious enough to require hospitalization. The mortality rate is about 1 in 67,000 for women aged 20 to 34 and 1 in 25,000 for women age 35 to 44.

In recent months, he continued, a number of reports, books and statements have come out that discuss the risks and dangers associated with using the pill that have only contributed to the concern about oral contraceptives.

Nelson said the package insert, which the pharmaceutical companies are required to send with their shipments to druggists, warn of "skin blotches, liver damage, mental depression, jaundice, breakthrough bleeding, loss of the sex drive and a very large number of other serious adverse reactions" associated with the use of the pill.