



TRADE & GOVT. MEMOS

CLARIFICATION EN ROUTE ON NRC'S DRUG SUBSTITUTION PRESS RELEASE and back-

ground

statement, issued Jan. 21 to announce text of resolution adopted by the Drug Research Board (DRB) at its meeting late last Oct. Exact nature of upcoming clarification action by NRC is not known because members and invited guests at the March 14 semi-annual meeting of the Drug Research Board were warned to keep quiet - almost sworn to oaths of secrecy. But non-substantive discussions with DRB members left the clear impression that something must be in the works - otherwise why all the secrecy and all the accompanying fol-da-rai.

- ¶ The known, public facts are simple, clear, obvious, and even elemental to any knowledgeable observer. DRB passed a resolution last Oct. 25, expressing its view that the MD must discharge personal responsibility by making a definite choice between: (1) Delegating to the pharmacist authority to select the specific drug product to be dispensed; or (2) Retaining the MD's inherent right to select the specific product. Only thing new in the Oct. resolution was a slight shift by DRB in the direction of more product selection by pharmacists, via the requirement that the MD make an affirmative choice.

When the DRB resolution got to the rarified atmosphere in which the permanent staff functionaries of the Natl. Research Council operate, a press release titled - *Drug Board Changes in Drug Substitution Laws* - and a related background statement were prepared as the vehicle for making DRB's Oct. resolution public. The press release and background statement represent the kind of *over-writing* about which scientists always complain. In wordy or obscure texts are reported in the press.

No confirmation is required for the fact that DRB couldn't stand still for the kind of release issued by NRC, notwithstanding efforts by NRC staff functionaries to clamp on the lid. The secrecy clasp confirms the following CIA-type intelligence evaluation: DRB at its March 14 meeting reiterated what it intended by the resolution passed in Oct.; expressed displeasure with the NRC press release and background statement; and demanded an NRC clarification that more closely reflects its Oct. resolution.

