

information that is available, it would be of great benefit to you to know at least the quality ratings of these products and then for yourself to integrate how much additional quality you are willing to buy for how many additional dollars.

The dollars are always available to you. You can always shop and know what dollar value is associated with what hearing aid. Now, if you have that information and if in addition you have the quality information on the hearing aid, it would allow each consumer to decide for himself that this hearing aid is twice as good by this quality index as another and it costs twice as much and I want the best, so I am willing to pay twice as much. Or it costs only one and a half times as much and is a pretty good buy, or it costs four times as much and that extra quality isn't worth that much to me.

Mr. WYDLER. Well, I am just saying it would seem to me we will have a struggle if we start to make this information available. We have to draw the line somewhere. We have to draw the rules and regulations somewhere. This is why I raised this whole point. This immediately seemed to become a problem.

The final problem I would like you to touch on is the question of politics. What will happen with this, politically speaking?

By that I am sure, for instance, if some company happens to be manufacturing a particular item in my district and is rated by the particular Government agency very poorly on something, the first thing that will happen will be they will send me a letter and want to see me and want to know why and how it is that I am allowing the Federal Government to mistreat them and misrepresent their product and so forth and so on and bring on me and every other Congressman involved tremendous pressure to do something about this that will require me and probably every other Congressman involved to go down to the agency and demand at least a review of what they have done and justification and possibly asking them to give you something to try to satisfy the constituent in the form of different wording or something of this nature.

I would tend to think this would become almost a commonplace problem, wouldn't it?

Mr. KAPLAN. Well, I don't hold myself up as an expert on politics but I have been around a few years and let me say a few things on this point.

One, pressures on politicians come from a variety of sources. I assume politicians weigh the amount and kind of pressure they are subjected to and they react in part on who pressures and how hard.

Pressure can and should come from consumers as well. So it seems to me that the more discussion there is of this, the more aware consumers become of what it is possible for them to have.

I think here Congressmen should take some leadership. The more they become aware of this, the more pressure they will supply for this information as counterpressure to the producers problem of saying this is hurting my business.

The second thing I would like to say about this is that I never in my wildest dreams would have imagined that the Senate and the House would have passed safety legislation of the kind it did.

If anybody asked me 3 years ago, "Is this possible?" I would have said that it is politically impossible. One couldn't conceive of such a thing happening, practically the largest industry in our Nation being