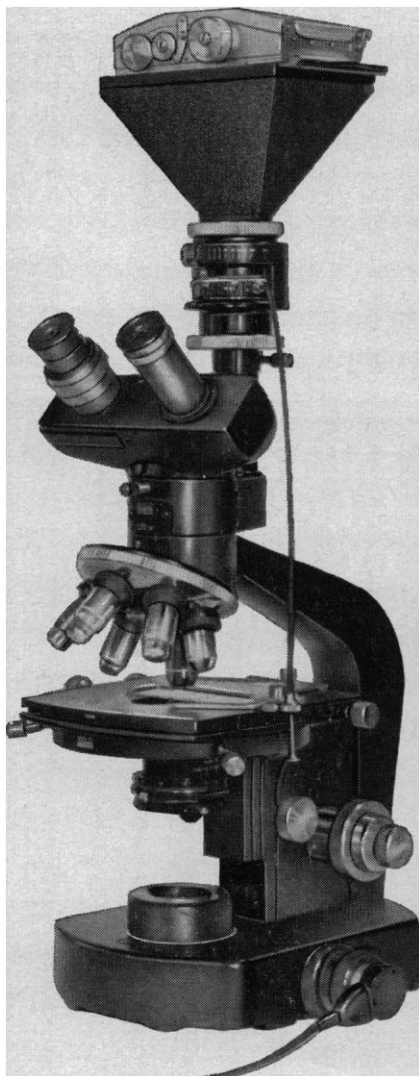


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## Letters

### The Drug Industry

Because so much of a superficial nature has been written as a consequence of the Senate's hearings on the drug industry, I have been particularly interested in the somewhat more thoughtful analyses prepared by *Science*. Your article last April [*Science* 131, 1299 (1960)] showed a strong effort to maintain complete objectivity. But I have been puzzling for some time now over your report of 16 June, under the heading "The drug inquiry: a curious affair that has netted some solid results" [*Science* 131, 1794 (1960)]. In brief, I find this report disappointing.

In the first place, you use the phrase "whatever complaints can be made about the style of the investigation." Covered by this brief, qualifying phrase is a perfectly outrageous demonstration of misleading, headline-hunting tactics. By implication, you take issue with such tactics.

However, you immediately go on to state that the "solid results" have "for the most part developed out of the publicity given the hearings, which the hearings won, in part, through the way in which they were conducted." Thus, you seem to endorse the use of questionable means to reach an end. And I cannot see that publicity is responsible for any results except unfair and misleading ones.

What do you call "solid results"? It seems clear to us that you are saying just this: after months of thin pickings, in which the drug industry could be pilloried only by misleading headlines, the Senate subcommittee came up with solid results when it turned its sights onto government agencies. Let me make it clear that if this is the real implication of what you are saying, I certainly do not espouse it, for I cannot condone the defamation of a fine agency such as the Food and Drug Administration on the basis of one or two incidents. If, on the other hand, you are saying that these "solid results" have come in regard to our industry, I can only ask, what are you referring to?

May I also refer to your comments on the "high-powered promotion race." While no one can reasonably deny the extent of this competitive manifestation. I think that most of your readers who are familiar with our industry will disagree with you that "there is pressure on every company to match the promotional effort of the least responsible companies." Likewise, I am confident that your readers will reject the generalization that "much of [this barrage of promotion] tends to be misleading." And, in the same sentence,

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I scarcely think your readers will adopt the assumption that this promotion is misleading "since its purpose is to sell goods rather than to inform the doctor."

Admittedly, our perspective, as members of an industry operating in a business environment, is bound to be weighted in favor of our vigorous—and we think generally efficient—methods of promotion. But, for all its weaknesses, we believe our system brings prompt and thorough information to the physician and allows him the maximum opportunity, at greatest personal convenience, to be well informed on the range of medicines our industry has placed at his disposal.

Finally, you raise a fundamental question about the appropriateness of allowing the drug industry to function within the structure of the competitive enterprise system. One's immediate reaction to this is to ask, why then should food, water, shelter—the things that affect not merely health but sheer survival—be supplied under the stimulus of the profit system? Cannot business incentive serve health equally well? I submit that our industry has served the public interest as well as or better than any other I know of.

I recognize that the social, economic, and political issues involved cannot be dismissed casually, but I worry about a philosophy that seems to suggest that health be "quarantined" into the government domain.

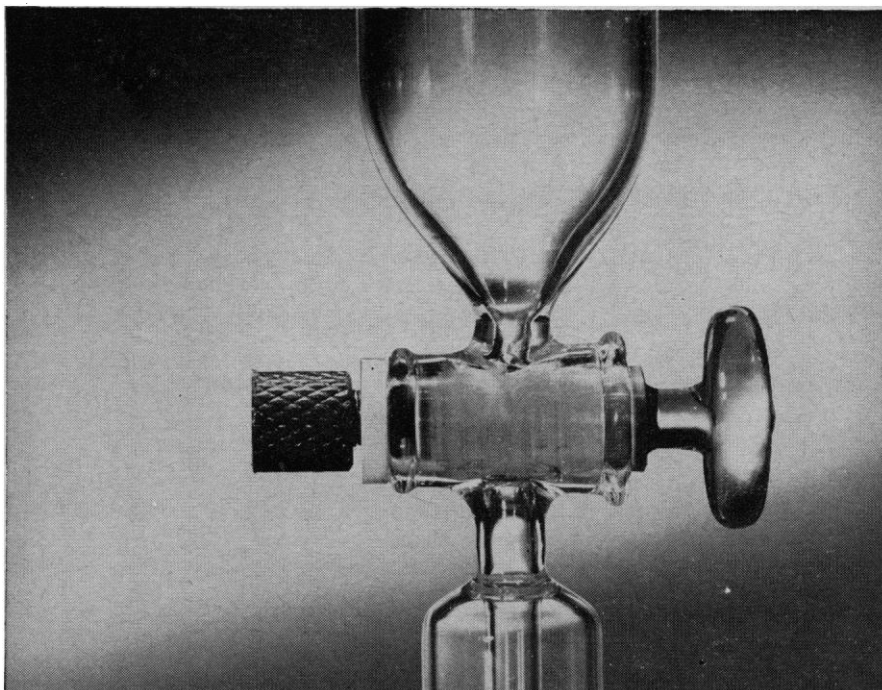
G. F. ROLL

Smith Kline and French Laboratories,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*The "solid results" referred to were the indications that the climate of opinion brought about by the investigations had put the Food and Drug Administration in a position to initiate reforms which they had felt were advisable but which for years had been difficult to achieve because there had been little public interest in what the FDA wanted to do. One example is the recent tightening of regulations governing the information that must be included in drug promotion pieces. Another is the FDA proposal for a new factory inspection law.—Ed.*

### Cannibalism

I was quite interested in Jay Boyd Best's recent article "Diurnal cycles and cannibalism in Planaria" (1) but question the use of *cannibalism* to describe the behavior observed. Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* defines a cannibal as "a human being that eats human flesh; hence, any animal that devours its own kind." Recent notes in ornithological journals report incidences



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