

Letter to Editor

More Irrelevance on Spurious Drugs

AFTER reading your powerful editorial 'Affront to the Constitution' (September 22, 1962), one had thought that our Hon'ble Ministers and leaders would come to their senses and at least for the time being, abstain from making irresponsible statements, which not only did considerable harm to the cause that they championed but also made themselves ridiculous before the eyes of the intelligent public-

The Hon'ble Union Health Minister has come out with another ridiculous statement while addressing the meeting of the Central Advisory Council of Industries on September 29, at Delhi. At this meeting, according to press reports, she threatened that unless and until the problem of spurious drug manufacture was solved soon, she would recommend nationalisation of the drug industry! One wonders against whom was this threat directed, against the genuine manufacturer who is struggling to establish his products in a competitive market by producing standard preparations under strict control, or against the Drug Control Administration, due to whose laxity or inadequacy, spurious drugs are thriving?

If eradicating the spurious drugs from the market is the basic problem, how is it going to help if the industry is nationalised? The drug-faker will be happily copying the labels as he is doing today. The printing of the currency notes was nationalised long ago, but counterfeit currency notes still get into circulation sometimes. To check the printing of counterfeit notes, would the authorities propose nationalisation of the printing trade?

Another instance of an irresponsible statement, picked up at random, is a statement of the ex-President of the Congress and the present Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Sanjiva Reddi. In a speech he created a public scare by saying that nearly half the drugs being marketed now were substandard or spurious (*The Statesman*, August 21, 1962). This is a very serious allegation to make. One would like to know what is the basis of Shri

Sanjiva Reddi's statement and if there is none, shouldn't a public apology be demanded from the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh? Needless to say, irresponsible statements like this by authorities are very harmful to the trade and have a most demoralising effect on the public.

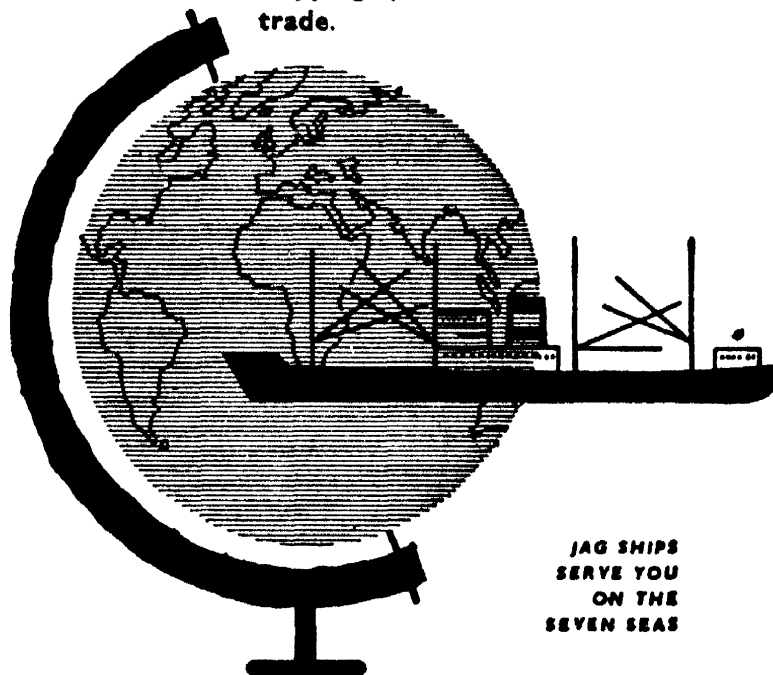
It is no use beating about the bush and sidetracking the main issue. There are spurious drugs in the market — of that there is no

doubt — and it is not difficult to trace the source of such drugs with proper vigilance. We have a legislation to prevent this and punish the culprits. We have personnel to enforce the law in different States of the country. It is time now for the authorities to take proper action and not merely indulge in loose talk so that in future the public does not suffer from this malpractice-

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