

rector—or most other patent medicines for that matter—except upon the advice of a reputable physician. The best counsel is still, “If you think something is wrong, don’t buy a bottle, go see a doctor.”

MYTHS ABOUT NUTRITION

The Food and Drug Administration has begun an educational campaign against door-to-door selling of various food additives and vitamin preparations. Some literature has been prepared for the sixteen regional directors and they will undertake to give it publicity. It is directed at some of the “myths” about nutrition and vitamin deficiency that are being exploited at the expense of an uninformed public.

Most conspicuous of the myths, of course, is that there is any critical vitamin deficiency among the American people. Actually, the diet and vitamin deficiency diseases such as scurvy, pellagra and beri-beri are virtually unknown. The usual preferred diet of most Americans is rich in all the needed elements.

But there has been a violent campaign of high-pressure advertising, radio, television, leaflet, and now door-to-door selling, designed to convince the American that he has some peculiar “deficiency” that can be remedied only by the purchase of some particular product. If there isn’t a real deficiency disease, the exploiters of such products are capable of inventing complaints and adjusting symptoms so that anyone who has an ache or pain, or is just naturally tired, can be made susceptible.

There are two things vitally wrong with this barrage of nonsense. In the first place, too many persons are being persuaded to spend money on unnecessary preparations. In the second place, many persons may be persuaded to rely upon some nostrum when they are in desperate need of a physician.

The Food and Drug Administration has done a good job in regulatory and sometimes punitive measures, but this is not enough. The public must do its share by building up a massive sales resistance to this massive sales approach. One way is to boycott the “phonies.” They are relatively easy to spot on radio or television by such familiar tags as “contains twice as many,” “works three times faster” or “your money will be refunded.”

But, more important, an educational campaign needs to stress that no person should buy and use any patented additive or deficiency cor-