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DRUG ADVERTISING AND THE DEFENSE PROGRAM

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Address by

JAMES M. MEAD, CHAIRMAN,  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Before the

PROPRIETARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



Biltmore Hotel, New York

Tuesday, May 15, 1951

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Proprietary Association:

It is indeed an honor for me to participate with you in this the 69th annual meeting of the Proprietary Association. Your Association was founded in 1881, with its primary and praiseworthy objective to preserve and improve the integrity and stability of the proprietary industry. You have contributed

and a further contribution that may be made, not only to the integrity and

In other words, unless there was injury to actual or potential competition,  
the Commission was powerless to protect consumers against false advertising

[REDACTED]

Unfortunately, during the last few years there have appeared in newspapers, magazines and other media, large conspicuous advertisements which have blatantly and grossly misrepresented certain proprietary medicines.

claims as:

"KILLS COLDS IN ONE DAY."<sup>6/</sup>

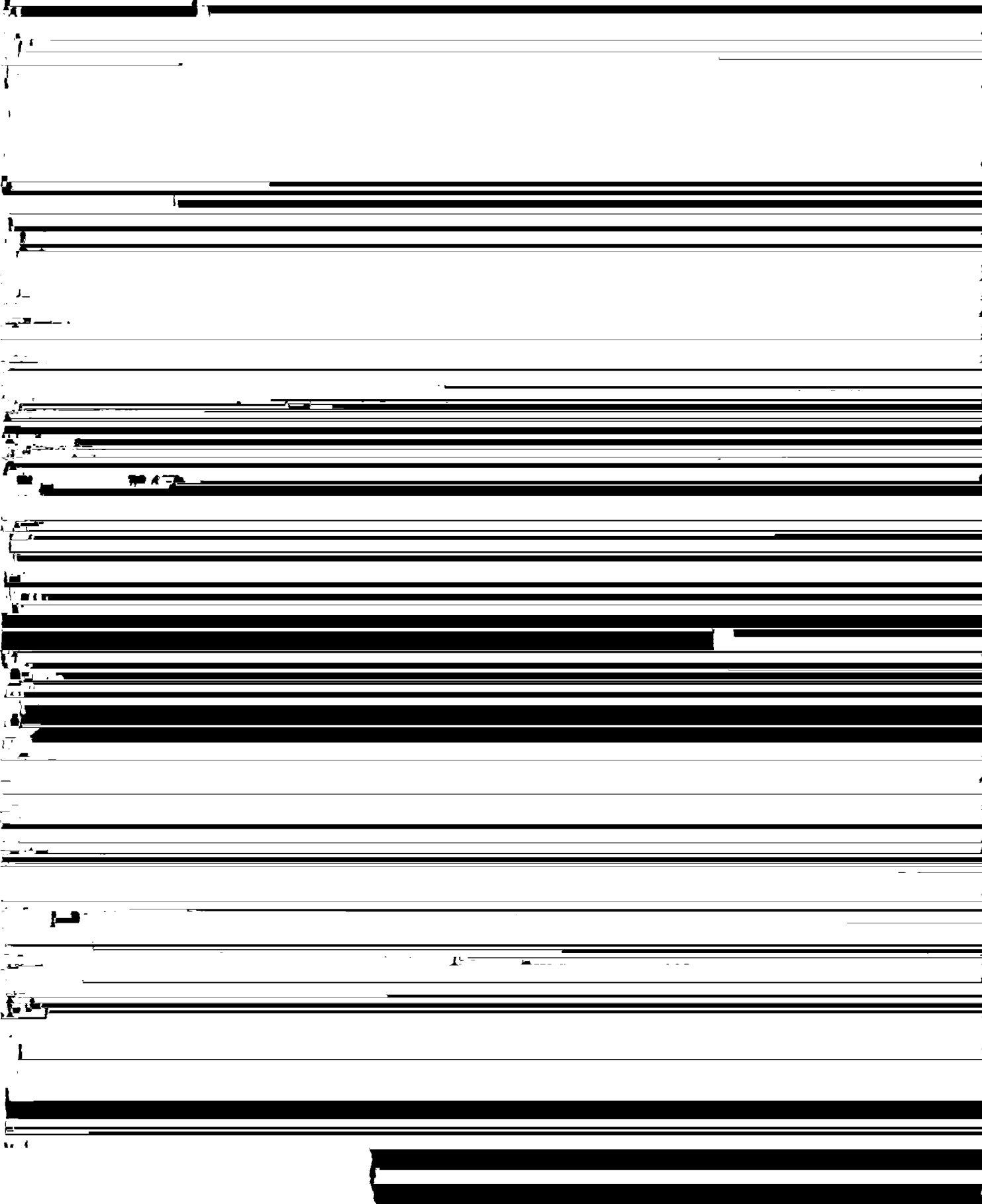
"GOOD NEWS FOR SICK PEOPLE" followed by a list of serious diseases.<sup>7/</sup>

"NEW MIRACLE DRUG."<sup>8/</sup>

"AMAZING NEW DISCOVERY FOR RHEUMATISM AND ARTHRITIS."<sup>9/</sup>

Many members of the consuming public are repelled by such advertising and it

It has been found that literal truth may not be enough to prevent an adver-



connection with the defense effort and such losses from its regular force are expected to make it increasingly difficult for the Commission to adequately maintain its usual functions.

Another shortage anticipated is that of materials. The members of this

essential oils and other raw materials for proprietary preparations normally

imported from abroad, became unavailable or in short supply. It became neces-

The Proprietary Association can be of real service in these cases by making certain that its members cooperate to the fullest extent and by calling the attention of the Commission to the violations of law committed by those competitors who, for any reason, either mislead or deceive the public or engage in unfair methods of competition.

As your distinguished Executive Vice President, Dr. Cullen, has observed: Advertisements for medicinal products should be dignified. He questions the

of the copy. The desire to use words that will catch the eye is understandable, but as Dr. Cullen observed, you are not selling automobiles, you are selling products to relieve human suffering. Therefore, the advertising for medicinal preparations should be dignified, in good taste, and based upon facts; and, moreover, in keeping with the high standards of your calling.

Your distinguished legal counsel, Mr. James F. Hoge, one time stated, "The permanent foundation for the life of the proprietary drug industry was