Daily News Digest Service

JOURNAL Evening Standard

DATE November 10, 1971

PAGE 13

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EVJ.

Nader lists 'illegal trade secrets'

WASHINGTON, Wednesday. —Ralph Nader claimed yesterday that companies use the label of "trade secrets" to hide information about damaging, illegal or anti-competitive practices and products.

The consumer advocate made his charge as the opening witness before what he called "one of the most important inquiries ever initiated by any committee of Congress," a hearing by Senator Gaylord Nelson, chairman of the Senate Monopoly subcommittee, into "trade secrecy."

Trade secrets are considered to be information about products, profits and other facets of a corporation which, if made public, could aid its competitors.

Among other things, Nader charged:

- That the Allied Chemical Co. hid from its employees at its chlorine gas plant in Moundsville, West Virginia, the fact that they were absorbing dangerous amounts of toxic mercury.
- That the Monsanto Corporation refused to disclose precautions it had established in distributing PCBS, a chemical which causes cancer in animals. Despite its precautions, he said, PCBS leaked into fish meal-fed chickens and turkeys, leading to the destruction of 88,000 chickens in North Carolina this summer and of 50,000 Swift Co. turkeys last week.
- That consumers need "the aggressiveness of a Washington lawyer" to learn the contents of processed foods or to find out which drugs are safe and effective.
- That the Food and Drug Administration, to protect manufacturers, failed to identify by brand names infant "walker-jumpers" and "baby bouncers" which had been found to amputate the fingers of babies.
- That General Motors evaded a law requiring car firms to notify Federal officials of all written warnings to dealers about safety defects. He said GM told dealers verbally to get around the law.

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