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Keep Public Drinking Water Pure

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. WALTER S. BARING

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 27, 1961

Mr. BARING. Mr. Speaker, I feel it is of utmost importance that I focus the attention of this Congress on an issue which is sorely dividing our Nation at so critical a time when our very existence is dependent upon our ability to strengthen our national unity.

I refer to a program launched by a subagency in the Health, Education, and Welfare Department of this administration to promote fluoridation throughout cities, towns, communities, and all States of this Nation.

During the past year voters representing some 2,500,000 water users in 43 out of 56 cities rejected fluoridation with little more than about 50,000 having accepted.

Water is a prime necessity for life. All people are dependent upon pure, uncontaminated water. The addition of any substance to a public water supply for the purpose of affecting the bodies or mental function of the consumer establishes a dangerous precedent and preempts the inalienable right of the individual to determine what shall be done to and with his body as long as in the exercise of that right he does not infringe upon the equal rights of his fellow citizens.

An article which appeared in one of the most recent medical publications confirms that damage to bones can result from fluoride which occurs in natural water at a level as low as 0.8 parts per million. The U.S. Public Health Service claims on one hand that no harm can result from natural fluoride water as high as 8.0 parts per million, yet they require many communities where this occurs to reduce the fluoride content when it exceeds 1.5 parts per million—or abandon the source of supply. This clearly demonstrates that the U.S. Public Health Service itself realizes that the margin of safety is either narrow or nonexistent.

To use the very words of Dr. Walter L. Bierring, M.D., past president of the American Medical Association:

> Prominence in the cause of disease is being given to man's management of the health hazards connected with air pollution, stream pollution, fluoridation, and radiation.

Fluoride additives have been consumed at an increasing rate over the past 50 years. Changes in disease pattern during that same period of time have not been explained away by medical science.

It is a fact that those who want their children to have fluoride can give it individually, in measured doses, with greater safety, greater reliability than if it were put into public water supplies.

Once the precedent of adding fluoride to the public drinking water has been established, there is almost no limit to the possibilities for the introduction of all manner of drugs. We may open a door which we will never be able to close.

Past errors should have taught official agencies that they should not assume an air of infallibility and an attitude of indifference to public wishes.

Among the many examples which have proven to be "human time bombs" we might cite the approval and use of radon, of thorium, and of iodide in public drinking water for the prevention of goiter, with disastrous results. More recently, the stilbestrol incident, involving a cattle fattening hormone, and the cranberry weedkiller pointed up the justification of the demand by the public for protection from introduction of unnecessary and unwanted chemicals into products intended for human consumption. When the harmful effects of these chemical agents, previously approved for use by an administrative agency of the Government, were brought to national attention, the then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Arthur S. Flemming, in ordering discontinuance of the use of stilbestrol and the cranberry weedkiller, stated:

> While the argument is going on, the consumer should not, in effect, be asked to serve as a guinea pig. The consumer should never be asked to take a risk of this kind.

I submit that this is the kind of action the Nation is entitled to in the case of fluoridation, especially when there are scientists of Nobel award stature who question the safety of fluoridating public water supplies.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, composed of over 20,000 members of the American Medical Association, condemned mass medication, including fluoridation and the use of the public water supply as a vehicle for drugs. The Medical-Dental Committee on Evaluation of Fluoridation, sponsored by over 1,600 physicians, dentists, and scientists, have critically studied the fluoridation proposal and have shown that it is not safe, that its efficacy has not been demonstrated. They have also shown many reasons why prolonged intake of fluoride may lead to serious chronic conditions for some people. Fluoridation runs counter to the historic policy of the medical profession in maintaining the doctor-patient relationship.

Because of the very important fact that each individual reacts differently to medication, only a physician can determine when fluoride administration should be reduced or terminated.

Another aspect of this fluoridation problem, is a need to bring to the attention of this Congress the unethical methods used in promoting fluoridation, starting with the fourth annual conference of the State dental directors and the Public Health Service held in Washington in June 1951, culminating in a now new accelerated high pressure program of the U.S. Dental Public Health Division that will be conducted through the use of undetermined funds now being requested under House bill 4742 and Senate bill 917.

Mr. Speaker, these are not good bills. They would permit uncontrolled use of Federal funds for promotional schemes not in the best public interest.

Furthermore, this unethical promotion, among other things, now takes the form of aiding certain questionable actions on the part of many State boards of health. These boards while working closely with the U.S. Dental Public Health Division, to impose fluoridation upon an unsuspecting public, are actually supplementing directives which originate at the U.S. Public Health Service. The results are not only misleading in content but, by misrepresentation and distortion, tend to convey to local communities that fluoridation of public water supplies is imperative.

The U.S. Public Health Service has aggressively, through the use of taxpayers' money, promoted fluoridation throughout these United States with grants-in-aid inducements. Fluoridation projects have been underwritten by/or subsidized with Federal funds.

The American Dental Association through close coordination with the U.S. Dental Public Health Division has coercive access to control of vast Federal health funds. It has for years been persistently promoting fluoridation on a national scale, using promotional methods not in accord with the finest American tradition.

Free expression of opinion is being prevented among physicians and dentists; publication and exchange of scientific data among scientists and members of the professions is inhibited by threat of retaliation and economic reprisals. Dentists opposed to fluoridation have reason to fear disciplinary measures from their local dental societies.

When approximately some 60 million people have rejected fluoridation, including those in 100 cities which discontinued it after a trial because of damage to health and property; and when 100 million Americans are now facing possible fluoridation of their drinking water, I believe a most serious Federal policy problem exists.

Our citizens have certain fundamental and constitutional rights. The sooner they are recognized, the sooner we shall resolve the fluoridation controversy. These rights must be expressed as:

First. The right of every citizen to a water supply free from any drug or chemical not required for the purification thereof.

Second. The right of every citizen to a freedom of choice in matters concerning his health so long as this choice does not infringe upon the rights of others.

Third. The right of the professional person, particularly the physician and dentist and scientist, to investigate and to speak freely according to conscience, without fear of censure, and/or reprisal.

I further submit that this program which would treat American citizens as statistical averages rather than individual human beings is needlessly provoking antagonism toward an otherwise effective and important agency of Government. Promotional fluoridation harassment and intimidation of the public is disturbing the tranquility of this Nation at a time when we can least afford it.

Many letters received by the Greater New York Committee Opposed to Fluoridation, from citizen groups representing some several million people of this Nation, are pleading that something be done to combat at the Federal level this promotional menace of forced fluoridation. Certainly when citizens have demonstrated unmistakably their rejection of fluoridation, and when there exists substantial disagreement within the scientific and medical professions as to the safety and efficacy in the fluoridation of potable water, it should not, it must not, be supported at a Federal level.

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