

to be heard. As I say, we welcome the suggestions of anybody to be heard who has any scientific knowledge that can be valuable to these hearings, to the scientists, to the medical profession, to the public, to the users of the pill.

Senator DOLE. Mr. Chairman?

Senator NELSON. Yes.

Senator DOLE. I certainly share in the views just expressed by the Chairman. I trust and I have reason to believe they will be balanced hearings. I do have suggestions here to make concerning additional witnesses.

Senator NELSON. We shall be glad to have them.

Senator DOLE. Let me say, as I said earlier, that I am neither anti-pill or pro-pill. In fact, I think the Chairman is in the same status. We are here to explore a very highly complex and technical controversial subject. We are not here to either crucify or defend or sensationalize, because this does affect, as I understand, some 8.5 million people in America.

As I have said before, as a new member of this committee, I plan to participate whenever possible, and I do hope that everybody who has an interest—not just the drug companies, but others—will have an opportunity to be heard, whether they have perhaps taken the pill, had adverse effects, have not taken the pill. I think, as the Chairman has stated this morning, the primary purpose of this hearing is to determine as much as we can about the safety of the pill because it does affect some 8.5 million women and their families, their lives.

And aside from the very serious sociological and cultural implications, we are dealing with the human reproductive system, which is one of the most complex and mysterious devices in the universe. So I certainly am here in that spirit, Mr. Chairman.

Senator NELSON. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Dole said he was neither for nor against the pill, and he assumed I am in the same position. I am not in the same position. I strongly favor the best conceivable pill that can be designed. I certainly hope we shall continue our research and improvement of the pill.

I think the unlimited growth of the population of the world is the most serious crisis the world faces, so I am not a critic of the contraceptive methods, and I hope we shall get a pill as near perfect as possible.

I would support appropriations for research to get a better pill and appropriations to get a better reporting system so that we shall gather all information about adverse effects. I will support the proposition, almost everybody else does, everybody before this committee, that the public is entitled to informed consent.

We called these hearings—before Dr. Ley, former Director of the FDA, made the statement that more information ought to be given to the women, before the FDA sent a letter just recently to the doctors of the country saying that the women ought to be better informed, and before the FDA sent notice today that the warning notices should be put into the package received by women—all of these things happened after these hearings commenced, and I think they are in the public interest.