

and are not able to take care of them, from a woman's point of view that is a tragedy.

Senator NELSON. What baffles me is that people are so excited about 6 percent quitting but unconcerned and not even reciting the statistics of 50 percent who quit voluntarily. I think there has been a rather great con game played on the American public, that you have a perfectly safe pill, that it works perfectly, and that you were controlling population growth with it when half the people stop taking it voluntarily.

Tremendous excitement when 6 percent quit, when they are getting some information that they should have had in the first place and if they had had it, they would not be frightened. They would already have known.

According to the same Newsweek article, two-thirds of the women said they were told nothing about side effects. Practically every single expert we have had, save for Dr. Guttmacher, have said they ought to be told, informed about the pill. Dr. Edwards sent a letter to 324,000 doctors saying, you should tell them about the pill.

Now, if these two-thirds who were never told anything had been told what the other one-third apparently had been told, then when the truth came out they would not have been frightened, would they?

Mrs. PROTROW. Senator, you say this excitement is new. I have been excited about this issue for the past 5 years. That is why I am working in this field.

Senator NELSON. So have I.

Mrs. PROTROW. I have been working in this field for the last 5 years. We have been urging more research, better family planning services, in order to eliminate this large number of unwanted children. I have been excited about this a long time and I am delighted you are excited about it, too, now. Nothing pleases us more than to see the degree of concern and excitement and despair over this problem of unwanted children and unwanted pregnancies. I would certainly hope one of the really constructive results of this hearing would be that the concern over the inadequacy of existing birth control methods would lead towards additional research and better methods in this field, better than the existing pills, better than any of the existing methods.

My concern is not that this pill, that these pills were the best method that exist in the world and should be taken by women forever; my concern is that the situation for women today, with alarming reports in the papers that are very difficult to assess, is creating an increase in the number of unwanted children.

Senator NELSON. I understood you to say my interest is sudden. I might say that for a good many years I have been speaking and have spoken in over half of the States of the Union, saying that the disaster that is coming is overpopulation. It is a disaster right now. America is overpopulated probably by 100 million. We have demonstrated our incapacity to preserve a decent environment for 200 million, and it will be a catastrophe at 300 million, which is surely coming.