

This mean little episode would not be worth recounting were it not for a couple of facts. One is that the "Nelson babies" phrase attracted substantial attention in news media. A second fact is that a troubling impression emerges from a reading of the hearing transcript: that the slur on Nelson was symptomatic of the attitudes of certain population control advocates. They were angry not only at Nelson, who happens to be one of the most ardent and articulate supporters of family planning on Capitol Hill, but also at much of the press and even, far-fetched as it may sound, at the application of democratic process to their particular cause, worthy and important as it is.

Consider Dr. Harold Schulman of Albert Einstein College of Medicine. While denying that he was urging "a type of censorship," he said, "If hearings such as this are going to be held, I believe the committee must carefully plan and screen all individuals who are invited to testify as to the content of their testimony." The ABM, Vietnam, Laos—subjects such as these may be the subject of Congressional hearings but not, he was suggesting, something as sensitive as The Pill.

Dr. Anna L. Southam, of Columbia College of Physicians & Surgeons, told the Subcommittee, "I beg the press to report accurately or not at all." But she created a strong impression that, deep down, she would prefer no reporting at all to accurate reporting of, say, a statement that The Pill "should be monitored and restricted to women who cannot use other methods effectively." That statement happens to have been made by Dr. Philip A. Corfman, director of the Center for Population Research at the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. Dr. Southam did not say if she was troubled by the accurate reporting of the uneasiness about widespread use of The Pill acknowledged by Dr. Louis M. Hellman, former chairman of the Food and Drug Administration's outside consultants on contraception.

So far as is known, no one has complained of inaccuracy in the reporting of another authoritative statement: that until recently the effects of The Pill were "inadequately investigated or ignored. . . . No tissue or organ system is free from a biological, functional and/or morphological effect. . . . Many of the changes appear to be reversible after short periods of treatment, but it is impossible to form judgments on the reversibility of some of the changes resulting from prolonged administration." That statement was made by Dr. Hilton A. Salhanik of Harvard and two other scientists who, in behalf of the National Institutes of Health, ran a workshop on the metabolic effects of The Pill.

Dr. Southam also was upset by "nonmedical science writers" (possibly including the generalist writing this article), as was Dr. Schulman. This was a way of saying that they disapprove of those reporters who disclosed, among other things, that the safety of The Pill had not been demonstrated before massive use began. In Dr. Southam's view, such reporters do "a disservice to the consumer who should depend on her doctor for advice." Which doctor? Southam or Corfman? Schulman or Salhanik? Perhaps Alan F. Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood-World Federation. His case may be the most interesting of the lot.

Physicians have prescribed The Pill for millions of American women—far more than the 8.5 million estimated to be taking it currently. In his prepared statement, Dr. Guttmacher cited a Gallup Poll in the February 9 issue of *Newsweek*. One highly revealing disclosure in the article was that two-thirds of the women quitting The Pill said their doctors had failed to apprise them of the risks—some of which, especially blood-clotting diseases, have been demonstrated. When asked about the disclosure by Senator Nelson, Guttmacher said, "No, I do not remember that."

Guttmacher did not assert that doctors had educated themselves about The Pill before massively prescribing it; indeed, he conceded—under questioning—that "perhaps the American physician has been remiss in not trying to educate himself about the intricacies of The Pill." For such hope as it may offer, his claim was that the medical profession is "educable."

Nelson brought up one of the numerous drug company pamphlets that made blatantly misleading, and sometimes downright false, euphoric statements about safety. Guttmacher agreed, as he had to do, that such statements were far out of line. But he had not, and other population-control advocates had not, protested the pamphlets when protest might have done some good—during the decade of the 1960s when doctors were handing them out by the millions. The protests came from the FDA and the "nonmedical science writers" disdained by the Southams and the Schulmans.

It was with poor grace that the population-control leaders laid down a barrage of attacks on Nelson for holding hearings, the entire purpose of which was to