

determine if women were being adequately informed about known and possible hazards of The Pill. In an exchange with the Senator, Guttmacher did say that the hearings had "served a useful purpose in making the doctor more careful," and General William H. Draper, Jr., honorary chairman of the Population Crisis Committee, predicted that "the long-range effect . . . will be constructive and in the interest of the American people."

But on the whole Guttmacher's performance was badly flawed. He went through the tired and meaningless routine of comparing the fatality rates of women on The Pill and women in auto accidents. He kept saying that it hasn't been proved, or that it is "conjecture," that The Pill may cause cancer, heart disease, diabetes, or other diseases. That is true, but he failed to say that the *testing* which would establish whether The Pill does or does not cause these and other dread maladies has not been done.

Last September the FDA's consultants on The Pill produced a report of almost unrelieved grimness. To escape it they came up with a legalistic gimmick. Saying that the law does not define safety, they drew the conclusion that The Pill earns "the designation safe within the intent of the legislation." Dr. Guttmacher approved of that conclusion. It is "verbiage which is difficult to define," he testified. "But at least it is verbiage which does create a certain sense of complacency in the user."

Dr. Guttmacher himself has produced verbiage which tranquilized women so they could be hormonized. Until studies demonstrated a cause-effect relation between The Pill and clotting, he was saying it hadn't been proved that there was such a connection. "It can be stated flatly that the pills do not interfere with a woman's ability to bear children when she stops taking them," he said in a signed article in the February, 1966 issue of *Good Housekeeping*. It can be stated flatly that this statement, challengeable even before he made it, is in error: Some women *do* become infertile.

In the February 9 *Newsweek* article, it was noted that eighteen percent of the women polled recently had stopped using The Pill, and that only one-third of them, or six percent, had given as their reason doubts generated by the Nelson hearings. But on February 24, Dr. Elizabeth B. Connell of Columbia, and the next day Dr. Guttmacher, put the blame on Nelson for the entire eighteen percent. With the eighteen percent as a base, they made extrapolations about the ultimate number of resulting pregnancies (with scant regard for those women who switched to methods other than The Pill) and child batterings (without acknowledging the lack of an established correlation between children who were unwanted at the time of conception and children who are beaten). It was even suggested that large numbers of women, because of the hearings, already had become pregnant and were seeking abortions. This suggestion was knocked down by the calendar.

The Nelson hearings began on January 14. Dr. Connell's testimony was figured to have been completed and mailed off to the Subcommittee on February 19. That was five or six days short of the time needed for a number of women to be frightened by the hearings, stop using The Pill, become fertile, conceive, and be reliably tested for pregnancy.

Some other points got buried in the rather fast shuffle in which witnesses such as Dr. Connell engaged. For example, millions of women have given up The Pill over the years because they didn't like the synthetic hormones, or because of other reasons unrelated to criticism of the drugs. Nelson cited a Chicago study showing that within two months of inception of use, forty percent of a group of women stopped using The Pill.

At one point in the hearings Nelson said in exasperation, "I think there has been a rather great con game played on the American public." But why would such a thing be done? The answer is in significant part that The Pill drove a wedge between "woman" and "women"—between the individual and social engineering, between safety for one person and efficacy among millions.

Once evidence of hazards began to develop and be reported, the population control people were put in a dilemma. How could attention be called to the risks without peril to their cause? How could they call attention to dishonesty in pamphlets published by manufacturers and distributed by doctors without simultaneously faulting, say, an assertion such as one made by Dr. John Rock, in the January, 1968 issue of *Family Circle*, that The Pill "is perfectly safe"? How could they help but be nervous about fair reporting? How could they not be privately terrified by the prospects of Senate hearings intended to elicit literally vital facts, rather than "verbiage" which creates "complacency" in the user?