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enson and John Prentice



By Ferd Johnson



Saunders and Overgard



Doctors Fired in Additives Fight

By Drew Pearson

The public doesn't know it, but the battle over food additives and cancer-suspected chemicals has been so cut-throat that four doctors and scientists lost their jobs when they took firm stands against certain companies and institutions interested in the continued use of these additives and chemicals.



Pearson

This is part of the real background of the cranberry dispute. It's been brewing for a long time, and only came to a head when the Food and Drug Administration was given power by a recent act of Congress to crack down on farmers, cosmetic companies, food and chemical companies immediately, without protracted hearings in the courts.

The cancer firings of doctors was spelled out in testimony before the House Interstate Commerce Committee when it tightened the Food and Drug Act last year. The doctors who were fired were:

• Dr. William E. Smith, dropped from New York University when he persisted in warning of cancer hazards in industry.

• Dr. William C. Hueper, dropped by du Pont when he published a paper showing that beta-naphthylamine (used for dyes) produced cancer in dogs.

• Dr. Arthur Vorwald, dropped as director of the Saranac Laboratory when he reported that lung cancer could be induced by a chemical dust of industrial importance.

• Dr. Robert Collier Page, who was eased out as medical director of Standard Oil of New Jersey when he campaigned for a major study of cancer-inducing properties of chemicals.

Battle of Doctors

Dr. Smith, a resident of Englewood, N. J., latterly doing research on food additives for the American Academy of Nutrition, testified at length on this before the Interstate Commerce Committee.

"In 1950," he said, "the National Cancer Institute of the U. S. Public Health Service established a program for the study of environmental chemical factors in cancer.

"Within a few years Dr. A. J. Lanza, then director of the Institute of Industrial Medicine at New York University, told me that he had been retained by a group of chemical industries to call upon the Surgeon General (of the U. S. Public Health Service) and object to studies conducted under this program. He stated that his objections had been successful and that all field studies by the National Cancer Institute in this program would be stopped. They were.

"A few years later I showed this same gentleman data indicating a cancer hazard for men employed in another industry that had retained him as a consultant. He advised me to keep out of this problem, and shortly there after notified me that my appointment as associate professor of industrial medicine at New York University would not be renewed. It was not renewed.

"Last year an official of one of the large chemical companies told me that they had fired their medical director because he was too interested in carcinogens in their products."

Carcinogens are cancer-producing substances or agents.

Cancer Work Stopped

There were some attempted denials of Dr. Smith's statement. But his testimony was substantiated by other doctors. One of these was Dr. W. C. Hueper, formerly with du Pont, and now in charge of the environmental cancer section of the National Cancer Institute. He wrote:

"My activities in fieldwork on environmental cancer (for the U. S. Public Health Service) was discontinued during the latter part of the summer of 1951 when I was requested to stop such activities and have no further contacts with industry or state health departments in matters of environmental and occupational cancer.

"This event was brought about by a complaint, as I was officially told, about my activities in regard to studying conditions bringing about lung cancers among workers employed in the chromate industry . . ."

"Dr. Lanza apparently acted in the role of a lobbyist, because in a telephone conversation on July 25, 1951, I had in regard to this matter with (the late) Mr. O. F. Tarr, vice president, Mutual Chemical Co., I was told Dr. Lanza had taken this step in behalf of the American chromate industry.

"Due to these lobbying activities of Dr. Lanza," continued Dr. Hueper, "not only my field studies have come to an end since 1951, but there was for some reason serious interference with my experimental work in the field of occupational cancer."

Dr. Smith also said: "I have a wife and three children. I got entangled in this problem of carcinogens and the result is that I have no job and no prospect of ever being able to continue in the field to which I have devoted my scientific career."

Thus is waged the battle of cranberries, chemicals and food additives over cancer.

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Harry Homeowner Says: