

Fluoride Pros Cons Debated

Only 30 people turned up at the high school last Thursday night to hear the question of fluoridation of the water supply debated by lecturer Mrs. J. T. Burton, president of the Citizens Rights Association and Dr. Ralph Burgess, faculty of dentistry, University of Toronto.

Moderator John T. Armstrong gave each speaker ten minutes to express their views, then a rebuttal time, and finally a question and answer period. The meeting was organized by the Rotary Club in an effort to put the facts before the voters.

MORE MONEY SPENT
Dr. Burgess stressed the prevalence of tooth decay, the resulting pain and the economic burden. "More money is spent on decayed teeth than on all cardiovascular diseases," he maintained. "Last year \$240,000,000 was spent on dental care, or \$10 for every man woman and child in Canada."

He claimed fluoride would cut both the cost and the caries. He cited instances of places where the fluoride was in the water naturally, and had been for generations, as the spark that prompted investigation into the effect, when it was shown these areas had a much lower incidence of tooth decay.

THROUGH LIFETIME
Dr. Burgess explained that 1 part per million formula had been arrived at by testing the water in these areas, and determining that more than 1 part per million showed no greater decrease in tooth decay. He denied it benefited only children, saying the benefit is carried all through the lifetime.

He listed the cost of fluoride at 15¢ per person per year, and said it was completely safe. "Even where the fluoride content was as high as 8", no harm was done to bones, kidneys or diabetics," he concluded.

SCIENTISTS OPPOSED
Mrs. Burton stated fluoride was a toxic cumulative drug. "Why should all the water be treated to prevent a disease which is not contagious. Why should it be taken the rest of our lives, when we know nothing about allergies to this drug," she began. She claimed Dr. A. Reuben, an allergist, had found a percentage of all people were allergic to the drug. She listed many scientists opposed to the addition of fluoride.

With Dr. Linus Pauling, Nobel Peace Prize winner, topping the list. "If a drug can make cellular changes in tooth enamel, it must be very smart not to make cellular changes in the organs of the body," she charged.

She questioned the effectiveness of fluoride, since Etobicoke where she lives, after having

fluoride in the water for two years, sent letters to parents urging them to take their children to the free fluoride application clinic.

POISONING
She suggested the fluoride would pollute the lakes, and produce mottled teeth. "In a study in 1961, of an area of fluoride in the water 20% of the children were found to have mottled teeth, in other words, she added "1 in 5 children were suffering from fluoride poisoning."

She criticized the claim that 1.5 parts per million was a safe amount, and wondered if the machinery adding the substance to the water ever went wrong. She said she has the water tested regularly and discovered it was seldom accurate.

She concluded by advocating a better diet and less pop as a safer way to prevent tooth decay.

ALL FOR IT
In rebuttal, Dr. Burgess pointed out that people who make public health their life's work are all for fluoride. He challenged the statements about causing illness, asking "Where are all those illnesses?" He emphasized that public health authorities are not going to prejudice one part of the body for another.

Mrs. Burton claimed the third generation of animals given fluoride in water were crippled, and 300 parts of fluoride were found in the soft tissues. "Nobody has the right to force anyone to drink fluoride in water, we should have a choice, we can have the teeth coated externally with fluoride," she argued.

She foresaw the addition of fluoride to water as the opening wedge for other mass medication, and cited a speech of a Toronto psychiatrist who advocated adding birth control pills to water every other year.

BANNED IN PREGNANCY
During the question period which followed Mrs. Burton stated she was not opposed to chlorine in the water since it treats the bacteria in the water, and does not treat the body. To a question about iodine in salt, she stated she had a choice should not have to take iodized salt. To another question she replied that 25 years of experiment were not long enough to show if there are effects on future generations. She claimed further that the Food and Drug Administration in Washington had banned fluoride to all pregnant women. In reply to another question on the fairness of giving fluoride to the whole population, Mrs. Burton said it violates everyone's right to individual choice.

NO SUCH THING
Dr. Burgess in answer to a question stated there was no such thing as artificial fluoride since it all comes from the same source. "Elements cannot be created," he added. To another question he answered, "with all this research no one has been able to nail down any harmful effects." In reply to another question Dr. Burgess said the people did not consistently take tablets when they distributed freely.

Bob McDonald, president of the Georgetown Rotary Club thanked the panellists for attending, and hoped the audience was better equipped to vote on the issue as a result of the meeting.

ELECTION COVERAGE
The Herald phones rang briskly for three hours Monday night as election returns were relayed from polling booths to keep voters informed about the progress of the vote. Co-operation of DROs was appreciated in bringing this service to the public.

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SOCIAL & PERSONAL

Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Power celebrated their silver wedding anniversary last Friday evening by a surprise party given by

Mr. and Mrs. John Ouellette and their other daughter Susan Power. The guest list included relatives from Hamilton, Burlington, and Toronto and friends from Georgetown. They were presented with a silver tree filled with money and gifts. There was a cake decorated with white pink and silver to go topped with a white luscious and groom. The couple extended a warm surprise possible and enjoyable.

THE GEORGETOWN HERALD
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