



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
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21 August 1979

Dear Mike

You wrote to me on 13 August enclosing a copy of Sir Emmanuel Kaye's letter of 9 August on fluoridation of water supplies, asking for Dr Vaughan's comments on it and for a meeting to be arranged between Dr Vaughan and Dr Dean Burk. Dr Vaughan saw this correspondence before he went on leave and although he was unable to comment he has made arrangements to meet Dr Burk.

Sir Emmanuel Kaye has previously raised all his present criticisms and allegations in correspondence with former Health Ministers and in correspondence and meetings with Sir Patrick Nairne, but as his letter to the Prime Minister indicates he has been unable or unwilling to accept the important points which have been made in response to his case. As recently as 8 August he and Dr Burk discussed these issues with two of the Department's senior medical advisers. Sir Emmanuel is quite mistaken for example in thinking that because there is no fluoridation in Belgium, Denmark, France etc. scientific opinion in those countries is united against fluoridation. Instead there are various political and legal problems operating, rather as in the UK, to obstruct the extension of fluoridation which is recommended by most recognised scientific opinion to be a safe and beneficial public health measure. He neglects to mention the widespread use of fluoridation in eg Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and, except for a reference to the controversial Pittsburgh case, in the USA.

As to the two individuals in this country whose professional reputations are said to be at stake, the safety and benefit of fluoridation is supported amongst many others by the World Health Organisation, the British Medical and Dental Associations, the Royal Society of Health, and the Royal College of Physicians.

The allegations of a link between cancer and fluoridation naturally called for thorough investigation. This claim has been examined independently by several authorities, including the National Cancer Institute (a branch of the US Public Health Service), the Canadian Department of Health and Welfare,

E.R. '

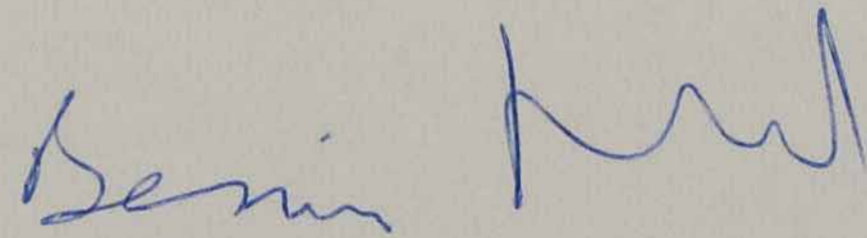
Professor Sir Richard Doll, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and one of the world's foremost cancer epidemiologists, and Dr Oldham and Professor Newell, two well-known medical statisticians commissioned by the Royal Statistical Society. All of these indicated that the work of Dr Burk and his colleague, Dr Yiamouyiannis, had neglected important factors in the complex matter of cancer causation and that no link with fluoridation had been demonstrated.

(Incidentally, Dr Burk and Dr Yiamouyiannis are biochemists rather than cancer epidemiologists).

In the "Pittsburgh case" mentioned by Sir Emmanuel, the Burk/Yiamouyiannis study was an issue before a Pennsylvania court in considering whether fluoridation should continue in a part of Pittsburgh and some outlying districts. The court's jurisdiction is the subject of an appeal to a higher court, but meanwhile the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources has reviewed the evidence and directed that fluoridation should continue in the area concerned. Fluoridation in the rest of Pittsburgh, where it began in 1952, is unaffected by these proceedings. Fluoridation is practised widely in the United States, and the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service has published a statement urging its extension.

There are of course other anti-tooth decay measures, as Sir Emmanuel mentions, but they benefit only the individuals who use them. Fluoridation benefits whole communities safely and simply by raising the naturally-occurring concentrations of fluoride in public water supplies to the observed optimum level. The most recent notable recognition of the benefits of fluoridation is the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the NHS in favour of legislation to compel water authorities to fluoridate at the request of health authorities.

I attach a draft reply from the Prime Minister to Sir Emmanuel on the lines suggested in your third paragraph.



B C MERKEL
Private Secretary

ENCS

DRAFT LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER TO SIR EMMANUEL KAYE

Thank you for sending me (your letter of 9 August) comments on fluoridation as promised when we met recently at lunch.

I have been in touch ^{about this} with Gerry Vaughan, ^{about this, as he} ~~who~~ handles ^{health matters at}
~~I have also made enquiries of the Department of Health and Social Security and was interested to learn of your earlier correspondence on these topics and of the meeting which ^{you and Dr Dean Burk had recently with} recently took place between two of their senior medical advisers, Dr Dean Burk, and yourself. I understand that the facts and factors underlying the policy of successive British Governments towards fluoridation have been ~~made clear~~ *clearly set out*~~

Gerry has asked

~~You will be glad to know that Dr Gerard Vaughan, the Minister for Health, saw your letter before going on holiday, and has asked his office to arrange a meeting ^{to him with} on his return in mid-September between him and Dr Burk ^{after he} ~~after he~~ *return from holiday next month.*~~