

Ghetto Pollution Report Is Hot Potato

By Jack Anderson

The chief victims of pollution are the urban poor, whose plight has been ignored at all levels of government.

This is the confidential conclusion of a federal task force, which also warns that pollution from the inner cities can seep into suburbia through commuter's cars, downtown drinking water, and personal contacts.

An exhaustive report, prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency, declares:

"City residents must breathe the emissions of suburban (commuting) automobiles. City children play in the streets over which the automobiles travel, inhaling the gases and dirt left behind. . . .

"Slums are plagued by rats because garbage is allowed to stand uncollected in unsanitary alleys for longer periods of time than in the more affluent neighborhoods.

"Dilapidated pipes and sanitary facilities . . . attract insects and rodents into the very rooms in which people eat and sleep. Insecticides are sprayed to combat the pests, but also, attack the human resident. . . . Lead-based paint chipping off walls, or accessible to children, causes lead-poisoning and mental retardation."

The study was ordered by EPA chief William Ruckelshaus, who appointed a special task force to investigate the "environmental problems of the inner city." The task force, in its confidential findings, lashes out at city, county, state and federal officials alike.

Environment Mismanagement

"To date, most efforts have been compensatory, palliative measures to correct problems created by the environmental mismanagement of the past," charges the task force.

Not even EPA is spared by its own task force, which urges Ruckelshaus to take drastic, immediate action against huge industrial plants, auto makers, oil companies and other government agencies.

Although the report is supposed to be released about January 1, it's being juggled like a hot potato by EPA bigwigs. Some environmentalists inside the agency feel its toughest passages may be toned down before the public gets a chance to see the report.

To prevent this, we'll publish in future columns more excerpts before they can be changed.

Footnote: The task force

chariman, Louis Lombardo, was fired a few weeks after the confidential report was completed. Both Lombardo and EPA agree the firing had nothing to do with the report's bold criticism of federal inaction. However, it followed Lombardo's personal attack on EPA for weakening pollution rules.

Washington Whirl

Bash for Butz—Agriculture Department sycophants, eager to curry favor with their boss-to-be, printed up party invitations in the name of "Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz" at least three days before the Senate confirmed him by a narrow 51-44 vote. Perhaps worse the party is being co-hosted by Butz and some of the lobbyists he'll be doing business with. As soon as the vote was announced, the bureaucrats dropped the invitations in the mail. They didn't even wait for the White House Materials Dealers.

Political Potpourri—The real reason Treasury Secretary John Connally is cozying up to the Republicans, say intimates, is that the Democrats treated him shabbily in Dallas after he was gunned down with President Kennedy by Lee Harvey Oswald. There-

after, Connally's relations with Democratic leaders, including his mentor Lyndon Johnson, became decidedly cool . . . Hubert Humphrey's campaign organization, which floundered in 1968, is now operating in high gear. His campaign aides are raising funds and corraling delegates with unpublicized efficiency. . . . White House aides, who are watching the Democratic race closely, are beginning to hedge their bets on Ed Muskie and Ted Kennedy. One aide told us Humphrey now looks like the candidate who will go into the 1972 convention with the most committed delegates.

Fountain of Youth—Dr. Alton Ochsner, head of New Orleans' respected Ochsner Clinic, has discovered, in a sense, the elusive Fountain of Youth. The aging process is hastened, he has found, by cigarette smoking, overeating and sedentary living. The Fountain of Youth, thereafter, lies in kicking the cigarette habit, counting your calories and daily exercise. He cited clinical evidence to us from his lifelong research. But the best evidence was Dr. Ochsner, himself, who at 75 has the stamina and appearance of a man of 60.

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