

# House Crime Committee Guts Report

By Jack Anderson

Cowed by broadcasters and drug makers, the House Crime Committee has rebelled against its chairman and gutted a report intended to protect children from harmful drug ads on TV.

Crusading old Chairman Claude Pepper (D-Fla.) proposed last November that all ads peddling pills and tonics be banned from the airwaves from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. The ban would have covered painkillers, sleeping pills, sedatives, cold tablets, antacids, laxatives, reducing pills and other nostrums.

A secret draft committee report explained that the ads were giving toddlers a "pill-popping" mentality, paving the way for future drug addiction.

After we disclosed the Pepper plan, promises of support came to him from Americans all over the country. But it outraged the broadcasters who saw it in terms of a \$261 million annual advertising loss. They moved quietly to kill the proposal.

Along with the pharmaceutical crowd, the radio-TV industry sipped its toughest persuaders on the committee. Some members, like Rep. William Keating (R-Ohio) with drug firms in his area, succumbed easily and maneuvered in the privacy of com-

mittee meetings to gut the Pepper plan.

There were a few like Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) who put his drug-ridden Harlem district ahead of network good will and pharmaceutical campaign contributions. He battled for the Pepper measure.

Although broadcast officials made a personal pilgrimage from Rangel's home base of New York City to pressure him, he stood them off. "They went into an absolute panic," he recalled.

Rebuffed by Rangel, the broadcasters then enlisted prominent fellow blacks to put the heat on him. "They were stupid enough to think that just because I looked like them, I would go along with them," Rangel told my associate Les Whitten.

But over the months, the majority of the members yielded. One powerful paragraph after another in the original draft has now been knocked out. From former committee sources, we have obtained a copy of the original document and can quote some of the phrases killed behind closed doors.

"There are more people in this country addicted to drugs manufactured by pharmaceutical companies than there are addicted to drugs smuggled into this country by racketeers," reports one deleted section.

Overproduction of addictive barbiturates and amphetamines is due solely to "unscrupulous action" by the drug firms. "Immediate restrictions" should be put on production of these prescription drugs as a companion step to banning children's hours ads on non-prescription drugs, says another suppressed segment.

"Our pharmaceutical companies are not only proliferating this country with pills but they are also contaminating our airways with unnecessary and deleterious advertising... It conditions (children) to the unnecessary use of drugs," declares still another blue-lined phrase.

"These commercials are designed . . . to induce people to take drugs indiscriminately, and thus are "harmful to the nation's health and safety," says a paragraph that must have made the TV and drug moguls howl. Adults are "insidiously indoctrinated," by the pill and tonic ads, says the censored report, therefore "children and impressionable teen-agers" are even more vulnerable.

Footnote: The gutted report is scheduled for release shortly. Even the handful of committee members who fought vainly for the tough, original version may have to sign the weakened document

in order to get anything at all released by their compromised colleagues.

**We Apologize**—We recently reported that the appointment of Daniel Horowitz as Consul General in Naples was made to please AFL-CIO President George Meany. The appointment, we reported, sparked a letter of protest from some State Department employees to Congressman John Rooney (D-N.Y.). They complained the appointment was solely a political move. We also reported, in error, that Horowitz was an inexperienced diplomat. Horowitz is qualified, and we regret the error.

**Late Comment**—We recently quoted from a confidential Senate summary of an interview with ex-Attorney General John Mitchell. He listed foreign policy adviser Henry Kissinger and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen among the top aides who attended the 8:15 a.m. White House meetings at which Watergate strategy was discussed. When we sought their comment, Kissinger was in Paris and Petersen didn't return our call. Kissinger now tells us Watergate was never discussed at any White House meetings he attended. Ex-Attorney General Richard Kleindienst also called us to say Petersen never attended the meetings.