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Excerpts from Remarks by  
Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey  
Annual Brotherhood Meeting  
Dental Fraternity of Washington,  
February 16, 1960

NATION MENACED BY DECAY

✓ Sisterhood

✓ Brotherhood

✓ Civil Rights  
debate

Mrs H

One of the greatest opportunities of this Session of the Congress is to approve legislation to strengthen international medical research. We are hoping that before too long, the House will have approved a far-sighted research bill, already passed by the Senate. Under the bill, the United States will strengthen world-wide research against such major diseases as cancer, heart disease, nervous ailments, mental illness, dental disorders and other problems. The House indicates it may considerably alter the Senate version. But I am hopeful that out of the ultimate Senate-House Conference Committee,

may come one of the great landmarks in international health.

Thus far, attention has naturally focussed on combatting  
the major killing and crippling diseases which strike so  
dramatically, cutting down human lives.

Without in any way detracting rom the importance of  
those diseases, cancer, cardiovascular ailments, etcetera,  
we must give adequate attention to some of the less dramatic  
but nonetheless insidious and damaging ailments.

Here, I refer, among others, to diseases of the teeth,  
and adjacent structures. In particular, I mean the problem of  
dental decay. This is, as you know, the most widespread,  
single health problem of the American people.

*Dental  
Decay*

Dental decay costs this nation a staggering sum. It  
takes a toll not simply in terms of financial costs to the

victims of dental disease, but in terms of human health, nutrition and happiness. For too long, dental research was regrettably treated by the United States Government as somewhat of a "stepchild." Fortunately, today, that situation has been largely corrected. But infinitely more must still be done in research. Toward this goal, the dental profession is ready, willing and eager to cooperate.

One of the recent publications in our Senate International Health Study pointed out this fact, confirmed by dental experts:

There is a priceless opportunity to learn <sup>much</sup> about solving our own dental problems by studying how and why dental disorders occur or do not occur abroad.

Already we have learned a great deal about oral diseases, for example, bu studying the teeth of the Eskimos. We have been intrigued by one foreign report that in a local study of

of dental caries in India, an average of less than one  
decayed tooth was recorded per person under 15 years of  
 age.

*A. S. S.*

If we can find out why this low rate of caries exists there,  
what there is in the water, or perhaps in the food, or in  
the way of life, which accounts for the low rate, then dental  
 science may benefit generally. (X)

*our "National Enamel"*

But there is a larger implication to what I am saying  
 tonight. The problem of decay into our national enamel cuts  
much deeper. Our nation is not simply menaced by the danger  
of nuclear war from without, war which can be a swift killer;  
it is menaced by decay from within - decay which strikes  
relatively silent for a long time, decay which is for a long  
time painless but which is nonetheless a menace.

In my judgment, our nation faces critical problems of decay which dare not be postponed. The centers of many of our cities have been decaying with slums.

The purity of our waters, including the Potomac, has been decaying with pollution.

Our school buildings have been decaying, because they are too old and too full.

Our roads have been decaying from mounting auto and truck traffic.

And there is another aspect of decay - a decay of will in some high places. It is evidenced by a failure to call our people unto a high moral purpose. What purpose? The purpose of saving freedom throughout the world. The purpose of

carrying the American message - adequate American aid - to

the two-thirds of the world, racked by poverty, disease,

illiteracy and malnutrition.

*Disarm  
Intern  
Atmosphere*

I say we must arrest this decay of spirit - this decay of

will - this decay of zeal to win.

*Human  
RTS*

We must strengthen the enamel of freedom if we are

to have a healthy national and international organism.

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