

Decades on, water fluoridation still controversial

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

The debate on whether fluoride in drinking water is poison or panacea started about four decades ago and in the years since, rather than going away the controversy around the issue has only intensified.

For much of those 40 years, several municipalities in Ontario who share the same water system have been debating whether to continue adding fluoride to the water. As far as one mayor is concerned it's time the practice was ended once and for all.

"If you look at my grand children's teeth, they've got fluorosis (mottling of the teeth) from too much fluoride," says Lambton Shores Mayor Gord Minielly.

Minielly explains that after reading the book *The Fluoride Deception* he learned that fluoride was a component in the atomic bomb and that when the war ended, "they figured a way to use up the surplus and make more money by putting it in people's drinking water."

"Quebec voted it out a year or two ago. We seem to be one of the last few with it in," he says.

But Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley says fluoridation of the Lambton Area Water Supply System was initially decided on by public plebiscite and "if any politician wants to take it out" then the public has a right to again vote on the issue.

"It's been in our water system since the 60s. In Sarnia it was brought in on the advice of dentists, and the dentists still support it," he says.

Health agencies and dental associations in many countries have endorsed water fluoridation's safety and effectiveness, and the practice has been touted as one of the great public health achievements of the 20th century.

But the international scientific community remains sharply divided on the issue, particularly the potential for harm to babies, those with kidney disease, and elderly people who drink water containing the controversial additive.

Studies have linked water fluoridation with a number of serious conditions, including hypothyroidism, reduced IQ levels, and osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer that strikes mostly young boys and the type that killed Canadian icon Terry Fox.

Dr. Hardy Limeback, Canada's leading authority on fluoride, is an associate professor of dentistry and head of the preventive dentistry program at the University of Toronto. He says the lower rates of

dental decay seen in recent years can't be attributed to fluoridation, as regions that were never fluoridated also have fewer cavities.

"There are many reasons for it such as improved diets, better hygiene, possibly even antibiotics—there are all kinds of reasons why dental decay has declined, and we don't really need the multiple sources of fluoride that kids are exposed to nowadays."

These sources include baby formulas, soda pop, mouthwash, toothpaste and processed foods.

According to recent research, applying fluoride directly to the teeth, such as using fluoridated toothpaste, is more effective than ingesting the chemical.

"If you use it topically it builds up resistance in the tooth; if you ingest it, it causes defects in the enamel which makes [the tooth] more susceptible," says Limeback, adding that in his dental practice he sees a high rate of dental fluorosis.

Fluoridation critics, who have long decried what they see as mass

medication with a protected pollutant, say the practice is based on outdated research from the 1940s and wouldn't pass today's risk assessment methods.

A 2007 report published in the British Medical Journal indicates

that fluoridation was never proven safe or effective, may be unethical, and that cavity rates declined equally in fluoridated and non-fluoridated European countries. The majority of Western Europe has either discontinued or never practised fluoridation.

Limeback says most of the fluoride used in water in North America comes untreated from smokestack scrubbers at plants that produce phosphate fertilizer and is contaminated with traces of heavy metals such as lead, radium, and arsenic.

In Hampshire, England, a battle is currently being waged with city officials who are pushing ahead with plans to fluoridate water to 200,000 homes although 72 per cent of residents oppose it.

A 15,300-name petition has been submitted to Downing Street, urging Prime Minister Gordon Brown to intervene.

Between 14 and 32 countries fluoridate their tap water to some extent, according to the New York-based Fluoride Action Network. In Canada, aside from British Columbia and Quebec where there is almost no tap water fluoridation, about 43 percent of the population lives in communities that fluoridate.

While Health Canada recommended a decrease in fluoride levels in 2008, it still endorses fluoridation, as do the Canadian Cancer



Studies have linked water fluoridation with a number of serious conditions, including osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer that strikes mostly young boys and the type that killed Canadian icon Terry Fox. PHOTOS.COM

Society and the Canadian Dental Association (CDA).

"People who are not in favour of water fluoridation will come out and make reference to fluoridation causing general disease issues. But the CDA, based on our understanding of the literature and the reports, believes that water fluoridation is a safe and effective mechanism to reduce tooth decay," says Euan Swan, CDA's manager of dental programs.

Swan says the advantage to swallowing fluoride as opposed to topical applications is that it becomes incorporated into the saliva which in turn "is constantly bathing your teeth with fluoride."

"So while one can achieve reductions in tooth decay with fluoride toothpaste and think of the action as being topical, there are studies that support the benefit of water fluoridation throughout ones lifetime."

In regions that have naturally high fluoride levels such as parts of India and China, crippling and deformity from skeletal fluorosis is common. Indian researchers have found that the early stages of skeletal fluorosis are often misdiagnosed as arthritis.

In the U.S., Fluoride Action Network is running an online petition calling for a Congressional hearing on fluoridation. The network is also distributing a statement signed by over 2,000 professionals calling for an end to water fluoridation worldwide.

Limeback, who was once an advocate of fluoridation, says there should at least be another review that takes the latest research into account.

wives to get to heaven. Critics of the group, which has communities in Utah and Texas, say underage women are forced to marry and have sex with much older men.

The special prosecutor now pursuing the case called the defense argument about political interference "absurd" and said the FLDS knew that charges might eventually be filed.

"The accused were fully put on notice," Terrence Robertson told the court.

Robertson said sending the case to go to trial would allow the court to hear from more than 50 witnesses he plans to call about the social harm polygamy does to the women and children.

Prosecutors have denied there was anything improper in the filing of the charges. They are scheduled to make their arguments to the court later in the week.

Legal observers have said the case is likely to reach the Supreme Court eventually.

Defense lawyers told the court that if the charges are not stayed for the political abuse complaint, the defense should receive public funding so it can address the complicated legal issues involved.

National Press Gallery admonishes Canada China Business Lobby

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

Canada's Parliamentary Press Gallery has issued a stern rebuke to the Canada China Business Council, saying it is "completely displeased" with the way the CCBC handled media access to a luncheon for China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi on June 23.

Parliamentary Press Gallery president Helene Buzzetti said in a letter that the CCBC decided "for no apparent reason" to restrict the number of journalists covering the event, including major media outlets such as La Presse and other newspapers, the TVA Television Network, Le Devoir, Sun Media, Reuters, and Bloomberg.

"Apart from the Société Radio-Canada, not a single francophone media group was in attendance. Does the CCBC, ironically founded by Paul Desmarais, need reminding that Canada is a bilingual country?" wrote Buzzetti to CCBC president Peter Harder.

Only a few handpicked media outlets were invited, said the letter. All other media groups that had heard about the event and showed up were turned away at the door.

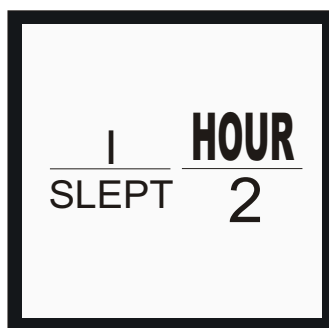
"It is unacceptable for an organization such as yours for an event as important as the visit of a Chinese minister to assume the right to decide which media are entitled to cover it. This is Canada, a country that upholds freedom of the press. It is up to the media to decide what is worth covering," said Buzzetti.

The luncheon with Minister Yang was put on by the CCBC at the bequest of the Chinese regime, the organization revealed in a letter sent to members encouraging them to attend.

Christina Spencer, a Parliament Hill reporter for Sun Media who has written articles critical of the communist regime, was turned away when she tried to attend.

The CCBC is an association that includes some of Canada's largest corporations with business interests in China. The luncheon was to be attended by about 150 of Canada's business leaders.

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Canada Day festival 'salutes' 2010 Games

By JOAN DELANEY
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Billed as "Canada's biggest little birthday party," with about 80,000 Canada Day revellers the Steveston Salmon Festival really was a big bash.

The theme of this year's festival, one of the country's longest-running and largest Canada Day celebrations, was the 2010 Winter Olympics.

The three Olympic Mascots paid a special visit, and attendees had a chance to meet some of Canada's Olympic speed skating hopefuls, get free giveaways, and win a VIP prize package for opening night festivities.

The day began with a pancake breakfast followed by the Children's Bike Parade. Starting at 10 am, the Canada Day Parade featured a Games-themed float accompanied by large walking contingents from the Richmond Olympic Oval along with Richmond's various "2010 community partners."

Several past and current Olym-

pic athletes also took part, including Olympic silver medalist and current world champion Canadian speed skater Christine Nesbitt and Richmond's Olympic snowboarder Alexa Loo.

"All the volunteers in the community centre have done a wonderful job. Nice parade too—lots of very different cultural representations," said attendee Eveleen Fowler, adding that the RCMP contingent in the parade "kind of makes me proud to be a Canadian."

In a "a salute to 2010" in the festival's trade show area, several Canadian national team speed skating athletes were on hand to meet the public and sign autographs, and some pretty happy people had a chance to have their picture taken with past Olympic torches. Official 2010 Games merchandise was for sale at The Bay's Olympic booth.

"We've come here every year since we moved here four years ago and we love it," said Sharylin Boshaw, who attended the festival with her husband,

Robert.

The couple lives near the Olympic Oval and Ms. Boshaw said it's "awesome" that the Olympics are coming to the city. "I think it's a really good thing for putting us on the map."

The festival also featured all its usual favourites including the ever-popular salmon bake, live entertainment with dance and musical acts, a carnival, cultural displays, trade and craft shows, belt sander drag races, and activities for children. A new addition this year was a variety of inflatable slides and bouncers at the carnival.

Among the feature attractions were a Japanese cultural show, an ethnic food fair, and a youth rock fest featuring local youth bands and a skate board competition. This year, the headlining group on the main stage was Tillers Folly, who played a combination of Irish Celtic, bluegrass, and folk.

—Additional reporting by Sandy Wu

B.C. court told polygamy case is political abuse

VANCOUVER (Reuters)—Improper political interference led to polygamy charges being filed against two members of a break-away sect of the Mormon Church, defense lawyers told a court on Monday.

The court was asked to not proceed with charges against the members of U.S.-based Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), which has been reported for years to be practicing plural marriages in the British Columbia town of Bountiful.

The case, if allowed to proceed, will be the first major test of Canada's more than century-old polygamy law, which some civil rights lawyers have warned may violate constitutional protections of religious freedom.

Defense lawyers said British Columbia's attorney general abused the system by appointing a new special prosecutor after one appointed in 2007 declined to file charges because the case was likely not winnable. The new prosecutor did file charges.

"(The 2007 decision) should have been the end of the matter," said Bruce Elwood, an attorney for Winston Blackmore, one of two promi-

nent members of the FLDS arrested in January.

The province decided to use a special prosecutor to avoid a possible conflict of interest because its own internal criminal prosecutors had warned in the 1990s that the law was likely unconstitutional.

"The special prosecutor was intended to avoid any risk, real or perceived, of political interference," Elwood told a judge in Vancouver.

The FLDS established a community called Bountiful a short distance from the U.S. border in Lister, B.C., in the 1940s, where it is believed to have several hundred members.

While the FLDS in Bountiful largely shuns outside contact, some members have acknowledged that polygamy is practiced. Blackmore is accused of having 20 wives, while co-accused James Oler is alleged by police to have two wives.

The mainstream Mormon Church, which once supported polygamy but now denounces it, has taken pains to distance itself from the FLDS, whose U.S. leader and self-proclaimed prophet, Warren Jeffs, is now in jail on sex charges.

According to the sect's doctrine, men are required to have multiple



Quatchi, one of the Vancouver Olympics mascots, was one of the highlights of the main parade at the Steveston Salmon Festival on Canada Day. FANY QIU/THE EPOCH TIME