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THE BOSTON HERALD  
January 29, 1958

EVIDENCE OF HAVOC BY AIR SPRAYING

To the Editor of The Herald:

Mr. R. C. Codman, who wrote that he "is actively associated" with the Commonwealth of Mass. aerial spraying programs for alleged mosquito control, also says that state tests have proved that the mixture used fuel oil with DDT last summer over Plymouth and Barnstable Counties was entirely harmless.

These testers must have used black glasses, and the trout that did not feel the poison were super-fish.

Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy, distinguished scientists, observed after New York State sprayed Long Island in the same way, that no fish in still waters survived. All bees in a large section of the state were killed. Indeed, evidence of the havoc wrought by all air spraying of DDT is accumulating so rapidly that Mr. Codman's placid assurances become absurd.

The mosquito control plane flew over our small town last summer. Since we live close to the marshes, we were treated to several lethal doses as the pilot crisscrossed our place. And we consider the spraying of active poison over private land to be a serious aerial intrusion.

The "harmless" shower hath killed seven of our lovely songbirds outright. We picked up three dead bodies the next morning right by the door. They were birds that had lived close to us, trusted us, and built their nests in our trees year after year. The next day three were scattered around the bird bath. (I had emptied it and scrubbed it after the spraying but YOU CAN NEVER KILL DDT.) On the following day one robin dropped suddenly from a branch in our woods. We were too heartsick to hunt for other corpses. All of these birds died horribly, and in the same way. Their bills were gaping open, and their splayed claws were drawn up to their breasts in agony.

Mr. Codman also says that between DDT and mosquitoes, he prefers DDT. We had no choice; we have had both. All summer long, every time we went into the garden, we were attacked by the most voracious mosquitoes that had ever appeared there. But the grasshoppers, visiting bees, and other harmless insects, were all gone.

The remedy of this situation is not to double the strength of the spray and come again. It is to STOP THE SPRAYING OF POISONS FROM THE AIR everywhere until all the evidence, biological and scientific, immediate and long run, of the effects upon wild life and human beings are known.

Air spraying where it is not needed or wanted is inhuman, undemocratic, and probably unconstitutional. For those of us who stand helplessly on the tortured earth, it is intolerable.

--OLGA OWENS HUCKINS  
Duxbury