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2 Equal Time On U.N.?

Since the Federal Communications Commission has ruled that its so-called "fairness" doctrine applies to television commercials as well as to political-type programs, we have a suggestion for them.

TV stations now are featuring two different commercials plugging the dubious virtues of the United Nations. These commercials suggest the U.N. is a wonderful organization doing a wonderful work for peace. Nowhere do they mention any negative aspects of the world body.

Now it is a known fact that the U.N. has been actively harmful to a number of people and nations. To take only two examples: It waged an open war of aggression against the state of Katanga back in the early 60s, aggression subsequently confessed by its own field com-

mander. And it precipitated the recent Mideast war by its abrupt withdrawal from Egypt at the bidding of Gamal Abdel Nasser.

So, on those two examples alone, there is evidence that the U.N. is harmful to health—particularly to the health of the people killed and maimed in these two wars. A case can also be made that it is financially fraudulent to the United States, since we pay a third of the bills and yet must submit our most vital interests to the councils of tiny nations who pay virtually nothing.

All in all, it can be quite logically argued that the U.N. is at least as menacing as are cigarettes, and possibly a good deal more so. In which case it would seem to follow that anybody who wants free air time to answer these commercials should be entitled to it. How about it, FCC?

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WHAT ABOUT CASTOR OIL?

Quite a good deal of discussion is being caused by the recent ruling of the Federal Communications Commission that TV and radio stations operating under a federal license which accept tobacco advertising shall give equal air time to anti-smoking programs. If the stations can sell the time to anti-smokers as they do to the cigarette manufacturers, well and good; but if they don't buy the time, they still get it—it cannot be denied to them.

This is government by arbitrary edict instead of by legislation; or so it seems to us. We have already observed in the matter that if it can be made "stick" in the case of smoking; it could also be applied to candy, potato chips, wearing apparel or what not, at the whim or decision of a regulating body whose members are not elected or chosen by the voters or the people they "regulate."

It is significant that newspapers and periodicals were not included in the ruling. This is significant in that it shows the changes in public thinking and acceptance over a century or more. Newspapers are ancient things. TV and radio are new. When newspapers came upon the scene, it was so much a part of public opinion that publications remain "free" that it was incorporated in the Constitution of the United States. Newspapers have never been licensed. Radio and TV stations are licensed. There's the rub—the leverage—the control. So long as this condition exists they will be inferior to publications as a means of dissemination of news, fact and logic.

Let's carry this business out to the point of absurdity.

Suppose there was a brand of castor oil sold in drug stores and advertised on the air. Under this ruling the stations could not re-

fuse equal time to the "constipated set," the people who don't believe in cathartics and think their use is injurious to the health, just like some people, including the federal health department, believe tobacco is.